

Crosier Priesthood

Since the time of the appearance of *A Concert of Charisms*, the discussion on religious life as coupled with priesthood has moved ahead a pace. The Crosiers, to date, have by and large¹ neither been involved in the general discussion nor in any particular assessment of our own Crosier self-understanding. This paper is intended to do both, in however partial and limited and inchoate a way.

1. Functional theologies of priesthood

The dissatisfaction with the overly-hierarchized and static-ontological theology of priesthood, ripened before the Vatican Council, moved most thinkers away from that approach to a more service oriented view. Specifically service of the people of God, even more pragmatically, service to parishes.²

The critique by Nygren-Ukeritis³ that religious have been co-opted into a parish assimilation of their members, and thus of their charism, set a *crie d'alarm* throughout the different levels of religious life. Identity, specifically religious identity as orders of religious, came to the fore in the wake of the alarm sounded and continues to upset in a healthy and disturbing way.

The call to reassess assimilation has set up the dichotomy, almost dualistic and conflictual, of priesthood versus religious life. The clearer ring intended a call to religious revitalization.

The different traditions and forms of ordering the religious life each tackle the polarity between ordained ministry and religious life in different ways.

The Benedictine tradition, for example, highlights the ideal laic pattern of monastic life as having just a few ordained members for the monastic liturgies, largely the eucharist. The Jesuit manner, by contrast, encourages identifying the ordained priesthood with the Congregation's apostolic mission. Thus the highlight falls on attuning the membership to the mission and sub-setting ordination, rather functionally and by intentional gauging, in the light of ordering the congregation FOR its particular mission. This instrumental view of ordination retains the functionalist mindset of ordination for a purpose, and wishes, then, mostly to redefine the purpose, the mission, the WHAT FOR of the congregation. The mendicant tradition, especially the Dominican run, tends to underscore the ordination as official acknowledgement of the license to accomplished, astute preaching. Whereas the

¹ We can note, however, with pride, the contribution of Steve Henrich OSC, when serving as executive director of CMSM, in seeing the CMSM commissioned publication *Concert of Charisms* through to completion.

² The history of the development of the rural parish system, especially beginning with Saint Boniface's mission to northern Europe, would be too large a topic to tackle here. "Among the greatest needs of the Frankish church was the creation of a secular clergy on the local parish level, outside the episcopal cities. If the Christianization of Europe was ever to be a reality, the faith would have to be taught by educated priests in each village. The dim beginnings of the medieval parish system, which we can perceive to be a real institution in some parts of ninth-century France, can be traced back to the work of Boniface." Norman F. Cantor, *The Civilization of the Middle Ages*, Harper Collins, New York, 1993, 170.

³ Miriam D. Ukeritis and David J. Nygren, "Voices of Religious Priests: Data from the FORUS Study," *Concert of Charisms*, 182-183.

Franciscan emphasis on the laic, non-clerical character of their non-orderlike fraternity⁴ gets highlighted in that prismatic, pithy, sloganeering aphorism now current: “we are all brothers, some of us are ordained.” The all/some contrast (while not dichotomizing) is nevertheless intended to be equalizing. Finally, the mission-sending institutes (while not necessarily or even optatively religious) have a distinctive contribution to the notion of priesthood as missionary apostles. These are first contact priests of the gospel and of the fundamental ground-laying, faith-implanting, church-founding apostles. These have a highly clear profile, corporate outline and characteristic contour for the formational task to be done.

The Crosiers hardly fit the major aforementioned patterns. As canons regular Crosiers traditionally are self-consciously clerical and hierarchic, somewhat in contrast to the lay-prone monk. There is little “ontological” consanguinity with the Franciscan slogan, however appreciative we might be of the sentiment therein. Further, there is the aporia of the clerics regular, under the aegis of the Jesuit stamp, for Crosiers who are not self-consciously defined by mission and honed to a proper, specific ministry (*opera propria*).⁵ The entire manner of formulating religious life in the mold of the modern apostolic congregations has left cold the older orders, who have a different way of approaching the religious life mystique. However, it cannot be denied that the “contemporary flow” of conversation, largely set by the agenda of the clerics regular, does indeed have spill over effects among the Crosiers. We will return to this influence in short order. Finally the Benedictine flavor of monastic life style has been the trojan horse Crosiers have sought to distance themselves from in recent renewal.⁶ It hardly makes any sense whatever for Crosiers to talk about ordaining only a smattering of necessary mass priests for the local priory’s liturgy.

We should also note here that the attention given to priesthood at the second Vatican Council was warmly receptive to a functional norm for priesthood as strongly related to a local church, especially collegially with the local bishop, and ministerially to the building up of community. The finest form fit for this ministerial priesthood, noted the council, is the parish community. Parish is not only served by priest-pastors, parish defines and construes the matrix in which priests are called out of an in-world membership in church, into active service and ministry. The highest concentration of concern with regard to priesthood, during the council, was to underscore and revalorize the diocesan priesthood, attaching most weight to a concern for good service to the people of God in

⁴ Adriaan Hendrick Bredero, “The Beginnings of the Franciscan Movement and the Canonization of its Founder,” Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1994, 250. “The transition from brotherhood to order was the primary change that took place in Francis’s movement. As a result, the charismatic aspect of that movement, on which the brotherhood had placed great importance, became subordinate to the hierarchical structure that they had to accept as an order.... One can read about this transition from a brotherhood to a hierarchically structured order in the Prologue of the *Regula non bullata*...”

⁵ Cf. Canon 677.

⁶ R. Kevin Seasoltz, OSB, “A Western Monastic Perspective on Ordained Ministry,” *Concert of Charisms*, 25-60. Cf. also, Dom O. Rousseau, OSB, “Priesthood and Monasticism,” *The Sacrament of Holy Orders*, The Liturgical Press, Collegeville, Minnesota, 1957, 168-180. One should note, moreover, that the most vocal distaste for a received tradition of things monastic actually and most vocally comes to the fore from the Jesuit sense of religious life. Cf. John O’Malley, “One Priesthood: Two Traditions,” *Concert of Charisms*, p. 14: with reference there to the title of the David Knowles OSB Sarum Lectures, *From Pachomius to Ignatius*.

parish communities.⁷ By so doing, the relational (interpersonal) and contextual (local community) dimensions of a theology of priesthood stand out as significant modifiers to a former more sacerdotal and power-centered understanding of priesthood.

We will return to a more critical assessment of “functionalist models” in due course. Here we should note in passing that attention to the central values of function and usefulness arose to stardom with the Enlightenment and became the dominant and controlling values in the modern world thereafter.⁸ So pressing are the values of use and function that moderns could not evaluate priesthood any longer without reference to these criteria. While not in themselves bad values, it is only in the post-modern critique that we have become suspicious of the overly reductive sense of functionalism and the one-dimensional drive to make everything fit into some instrumental, useful category before it is allowed being and validity. God, of course, has long refused admittance into the smallish box of being something wonderfully useful for the human project. Further, the divine asseveration, or, if you will, eschatological reserve, would also carry in its wake the protégés of God, either priests or religious, (in an older terminology, the person signed as “man of God”). Men of God are also less than socially useful or fitting. Parish priests, however, just might match with the criteria of being a useful social set. The Napoleonic Enlightenment pressure to make all religious conform to the black box of “usefulness to society” once threatened the Crosier Order with extinction-by-reason of their uselessness.⁹ During the Vatican Council the modern criteria of functional usefulness weighed in heavily during the deliberations of the council fathers as well. There was a pressing need to redefine priesthood as useful in the parish setting and religious as useful in the mission of the church. Again, while not bad values in themselves, the agenda set thus will tend to reduce to a uni-dimensional analysis of what we mean by priest and religious.¹⁰

Many of the historical studies of priesthood, during this phase, placed a high, almost exclusive value, on the leadership-service function of presbyter(-pastor)s for a community of believers. The three-fold function of Christ as King-Shepherd, Prophet and Priest fitted both the ministerial priesthood as well as the priesthood of all believers. The ecclesial-social unit that stood out in need of service was, aptly enough, the parish.

Critics, specifically religious critics, of the phenomenon of ‘parochial assimilation’, that is the over-identification of priesthood with parish service, have pressed for a rethinking of other arenas to discover the mission and ministry of religious priests. The functionalist box may be, then, a shade less black, but it is nonetheless still thinking within the same box. The religious who are doing neo-functionalist thinking are largely coming out of the “apostolic tradition” of religious, the “clerks regular”, those congregations formed, and having a vision and mission and purpose, in the shadow of the Enlightenment’s light.¹¹

For now, though, let this suffice to indicate that the functionalist problematic becomes even more mercurial.

⁷ Hennesy, 1997, 3.

⁸ Peter Gay, *The Enlightenment: The Rise of Modern Paganism*, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1967, 150.

⁹ Roger Janssen, OSC, *Ordo Salib Suci Melompati Pelbagai Titik Patah (1248-1998)*, Sangkris Books, Bandung, 2002, 77-78.

¹⁰ LG 46: “Let no one think either that their consecrated way of life alienates religious from other men or makes them useless for human society.”

¹¹ Janssen, 2002, 14-20.

2. Ontological priesthood

Very popular prior to Vatican II was the concept of priesthood as creating a new ontology in the person ordained. It was believed that the person's identity was changed to become one with Christ, ontologically. The identification that occurred resulted in the ordained person acting "*in persona christi*", rather than in his own name and being. The ontological difference thus effected made a priest not only a servant and a leader, but rather reconstituted him personally to be Christ present, really, rather than just himself. The identification occurred most clearly during the celebration of the sacraments and most especially the eucharist. No human priest-actor, but rather the divine Christ himself confectioned the eucharist. The priest, in that sacramental role, was then, not one of the community of believers, not even its representative before God, he was not just one of the priests within the priesthood of all believers, he was not just a degree different, but rather ontologically different.¹²

The discussion of the ontological difference centers on the character of priesthood, under the sway of the thomistic-tridentine theology of instrumental power. "The power that is given to the ordained priest (be he bishop or presbyter) is that of 'consecrating, offering, and administering' the body and blood of Christ and linked with this, the power of forgiving and retaining sins.... What he does in Eucharist the ordained minister does by virtue of the power given him in ordination, power that comes from the sacramental character which is permanently impressed upon him and which remains a source of effective sacramental action even when the ordained lapses from grace. Only the ordained possess this priestly character which distinguishes them intrinsically from the laity; therefore any notion of a common priesthood of the faithful which denies the essentially hierarchical structure of the church is to be rejected."¹³ The difference – framed ontologically – between laity and clergy seems to have been the overriding concern of Trent, in redressing the opposite contention of Martin Luther. By developing the difference in ontological terms, the post-Tridentine Catholic theologians posited the uniqueness of the priest in relation to the overall laity as a substantial difference associated with the power conferred on him in the rite of Orders.

In the revised version of the difference, associated with the second Vatican Council, and therefore with the running philosophical mood of the time, an existentialist-relational approach gave similar weight to a difference, without, however, relying on an instrumentalist-causal understanding of sacrament and, further, without framing ontology substantively, but rather interpersonally. The 'difference' that the priest is burdened with is not something in his substantial being because of divine powers he enjoys, but in his being pivotal in a community. His relational position is what makes his 'office' distinctive and ineluctably special. *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, under the title of "The Priests' Relation with Others" specifies the whole gamut of interactions and interconnections:¹⁴ from his collaborative relation with the bishop, the collegium of fellow presbyters (*sumpresbuteroi*¹⁵), a coordinated shared ministry with other ministers and fellow workers, as well as communion in the entire body of the lay faithful. In addition, priests interrelate with separated brethren in ecumenical endeavor toward mutual recognition and

¹² Is this 'different being' no longer, then, a christian, not even a human being?

¹³ Bernard Cooke, *Ministry to Word and Sacraments: History and Theology*, Fortress Press, Philadelphia, 1976, 606-607. Cooke summarizes the Tridentine doctrine in the quotation given here.

¹⁴ PO no. 7-9.

¹⁵ Cf. I Peter 5.1

communion, as well as with persons who have never heard the gospel, believers of different religions and persuasions, fellow campaigners of good will, and even sincere atheists, hostile and inimical adversaries, and unsympathetic anti-religionists. In short, the priest is pivotal to a retrieved view of *koinonia* as a communion that is inclusive, broad, and eventually all pervasive. His relational position is what gives him “importance” in the final view of the common human good,¹⁶ more than some sort of substantive power or a magical capacity “unlike anything else”. An understanding of priesthood related to an ontological difference that is ontologically relational certainly has more contemporary appeal than that of the power and divine identity of a priest as an occult stand-in for Christ.¹⁷

But even before the attention given to an ontological understanding of priesthood had developed in the second Millennium, there were older theologies of priesthood that related more to the order of spirit¹⁸ and symbolic articulation with the divine. These symbolic-interactionalist motifs did not overplay the difference between laity and clergy nor over-focus sacramental interest on powers to confect and transubstantiate.

3. Symbolic Priesthood: a structuralist analysis

Crosier history, being rather lengthy, has run through more than one model of priesthood. But the dominant metaphor at the onset of the order was anything but anti-functional. The ontological thomism of the mid thirteenth century had not yet been thought up at the origins of the 1210 Croisiers.

Sacramental theology was, at the origin of the Order, dominated by the Augustinian and Hugonian mindset and appreciation for “mysteries” and “dispensational economy”. Sacrament was more like a symbolic overlay on the natural life-world of humans within God’s loving reach, than a well-defined seven-fold rite-sized liturgical event. The touches of God included sacraments of: history, significant times and seasons, stunning inventions of justice, and cosmic rightness with the world. Symbolic readings on the phenomenal interventions of the Good God, ever at work and interested in the affairs of the human race, were accurate readings just because God was acute in writing his message, dispensing his wealth of good, flooding the economy with a wide gambit of the show and tell of his magnanimous love. The universe seemed rather entirely theocentric and symbolic readings on the universe manifested a self-revealing God.

Such a sacramental order did not, first of all, call for a functional priesthood but for a model reader-interpreter, an expert in matters symbolic and divine (not two things!). The priesthood was not there “for” the celebration of sacred rites, but rather a placeholder “at” the pivotal position of interaction between heaven and earth. Sacramental priesthood was not at all intended either as ontological or functional. It was rather, aspirational. More like

¹⁶ “Every group must take into account the needs and legitimate aspiration of every other group, and still more of the human family as a whole.” GS no. 26.

¹⁷ The ontological assimilation of the priest with Christ has little backing these days and Vorgrimler even asserts it can cause more confusion than it is worth. Herbert Vorgrimler, *Sacramental Theology*, Liturgical Press, Collegeville, Minnesota, 1992, 277.

¹⁸ Eric Voegelin, *Order and History*, Louisiana State University Press, Baton Rouge, LA, 1983, III:119. The “order of the spirit” – as developed in Plato’s republican polis – has distinctive similarities to the “order of spirit” that Paul evokes in constructing his image of the Body of Christ. “It is superfluous to point out in detail the parallel of this Platonic evocation with the Pauline conception of the Christian community, bound into one mystical body through rebirth in the Spirit of Christ, deriving its coherence from the like-mindedness (*homonoia*) of its members and overcoming the difference of gifts and characters through *agape*.” Cf. III:169

religious life holiness than service oriented for mission. Priesthood was rather signally under-differentiated from the call to holiness and closeness to God. Priesthood did not posture as “clear and distinct”, professional and noetically distinct from every other crack professional, and so properly productive in its own reserved social field.¹⁹ The entire cosmos was scintillating, shot through, with divine energy and priests were the signal pointers to that sacramental reality, which everyone else already believed as well.²⁰

Priesthood and religious life were not countervailing vocations, then, in the late XIIIth Century – nor, we might cite, since the Vth Century, under the influence of Dionysius the Areopagite.

Canons regular were a founded movement in the church to fill the symbolic space [place-holding] “at” the utmost pivotal point in the hierarchy, connecting there with Great Spirit. Priesthood was not, then, laid out in serving external rites and offices so much as internalized in the highest reaches of the upper-most part of the human spirit. Priesthood was symbolic, or sacramental, skilled living in the upper registers of ultrasound.

The major theologian of this sacramental power point was the Dionysiac Denys, a Pseudonym for the Areopagite of Acts 17. His school, further, stretches through the entire breadth of the Eastern tradition, and, then through John the Scott, Hugo of St. Victor, Thomas of Aquinas, and the pre-scholastic monastics in the West. Priesthood was not concerned with church-as-societal institution, but with rightly ordered being. Being as ordered hierarchically was accorded reality in as much as it was tied into and arranged aright, that is, toward the sacred. Hierarchy, in these eras, was not social order and stratified inequality. Rather hierarchy was the chained connection to the source of all life and holiness. Priesthood was the visible, signal, penultimate link to the invisible and ultimate holy.

Priesthood, if functional specialty there was (in a world not specialized or differentiated functionally), was ordered to prayer and being in touch with the mystery, that is, of God. Priesthood was largely spiritualized rather than institutionalized ecclesiastically. Spirit played a role in the chain of being, acting as formal anagogic cause, by nobility, by aristocratic betterment. Spirit “functioned” emblematically, by mirroring and imaging a fuller menu of the human project and thereby enhanced the human enterprise of life. The overriding concern was not so much geared to use in a social-functional and pragmatic ecclesiastical manner, as focused on the canopy-like sacral horizon. Priests of spirit specialized, contemplatively, at the confluence of the streams of desire.²¹ Their “work” is more like an erotic life-sized opus than the blueprint specs of assigned tasks.

¹⁹ L. William Countryman, *Living on the Border of the Holy: Renewing the Priesthood of All*, Morehouse Publishing Co., Harrisburg, PA, 1999. Countryman captures a sense of this sort of priesthood: “The deepest arcana take us beyond the realm of everyday things. There are secrets that are sufficiently rare, sufficiently difficult to grasp in our experience, that we barely have language to talk about them...GOD is deeply implicated in our lives, in every place and moment of human experience. Yet this presence of GOD does not mean that GOD is an object we can control, something to which we have access at will. The HOLY retains its freedom; it can be absent even in its presence... Priestly experience, then, is frightening and sometimes dangerous. To be a priest entails living on the everyday plane with an awareness of the DEEP under our feet. In reality, of course, all human existence is lived out on this boundary; and yet, we are not, as human beings, conscious of it all the time.” (p. 5, 7, 27-8).

²⁰ Voegelin, 1983, III:193: “Schelling cannot be quite absolved of the charge leveled by Irenaeus against the gnostics of the second century A.D.: ‘They open God like a book’ and ‘They place salvation in the gnosis of that which is ineffable majesty.’”

²¹ Anders Nygren, “Dionysius the Areopagite,” *Eros and Agape*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1982, 576-593. Hans Georg Gadamer uses the term “melding of horizons”

Liturgy, in the overall system of the dionysiac worldview, focuses and construes life under the sacred canopy's horizon. Liturgy is acting in virtual heaven. It does not have that moralizing flavor of sacred sustenance starters "for the secular week to come". Liturgy is the 'to come' now come. Priests are, then, to be, pivotally, where it is at. Isn't that place-holding, broadly understood, their ordered 'function' in the cosmic symbolic order of things?²²

4. Canons Regular as Place-holders in a Symbolic Sacramental World

Crosier priesthood, or more aptly and more broadly ranging, the canons regular movement of the 12th and 13th centuries, was intensively attached to the worldview of the symbolicist liturgy. Ordination was geared to a service [note, not a ministrations, ecclesiastical or social], but a service of God, a divine service, a sacral participation, a part at the peak, in the symbolic sacred order of the universe. Partaking of God, at the very level of one's being, gives point to the structural status position of priest rather than the functional use in action of one so ordered and pro-ordained.

The enacting of the liturgy, under such a symbolic regimen, has much to do with the "ex opere operantis" moment of attuning oneself to the mystery being celebrated. The liturgy is itself divine service, divine office, divine life shimmering all about (ex opere operato), everywhere, needing only those properly attuned, to plug in and resonate. Thus, the day order and life order of the high middle ages was an order of liturgy, a will and wish to connect with the source of all being and sanctification. Liturgy was the right channel and highest voltage. A kind of electro-shock therapy of grounding oneself in the highest dynamic of God, dispensing and explicitly causing his glow to flow into dim-lit, half-life men of slow understanding. The professional charge of the canons regular was hierarchy. Note, here: hierarchy is better understood as an availing, a placing oneself at risk in God, rather than upping oneself over others.

The "functional spill over" for the further reaches in the chain of being is not so much fervid action and direct operative service to these upper reaches, as it is actantial, symbolic ceremonious and embodied *bakti*, service-as-devotion. Being attached, as loyalists, unto God. Risking the all of life for the sign value of "that's what it's all about". The eschatological imperative (for the sake of the kingdom) was not heavily futuristic -- some day, pie in the sky by and by. The eschaton was the eternal now. Already out there now, here present and ordering this, OUR, life now. Having signal loyalists at the work of God, in the middle of the overall society, gave a different "functional" form to the society than one mission or service project, carried out by a purposefully "useful" religious

[*Horizonsverschmierung*] to explicate the hermeneutical task of interpreting history as it has continuing effect and revitalizing influence.

²² Hierarchy, conceived by Dionysius as positioning along a scale of intensities and sensitivities to the holy, rather than according to rank and prestige, construes priesthood as ordered structurally, then, rather than functionally. Hierarchy "works" to perfect the human life opus, through *anagogia* (spiritual lifting up) rather than through instrumental and materialist causation. "The source of spiritual perfection provided us with perceptible images of these heavenly minds. He did so out of concern for us and because he wanted us to be made godlike. He made the heavenly hierarchies known to us. He made our own hierarchy a ministerial colleague of these divine hierarchies by an assimilation, to the extent that is humanly feasible, to their godlike priesthood. He revealed all this to us in the sacred pictures of the scriptures so that he might lift us in spirit up through the perceptible to the conceptual, from sacred shapes and symbols to the simple peaks of the hierarchies of heaven." Colm Luibheid (tr.), Pseudo-Dionysius: The Complete Works, Paulist Press, New York, 1987, 147.

congregation. This “level” of the hierarchy “did” its service, standing in line, watching and waiting, in the public eye.

It is, leaping ahead by several centuries, probably a rather true “enlightened” assessment that the religious priests were “drone waste” on the society, contributing little to nothing. They never thought of themselves as functional, much less as worthy because useful. The whole criteriology had and has changed. The modern urges, more, insists, the only criterion for worth is use. What is symbolic, is merely and, then, uselessly dysfunctional. As long as the modern paradigm reigned, the functionalist penchant predominated. More recently, in the post-liberal, post-modern mindset, we can rue again the collapsing of the entire human world to the merely instrumental and immediately worthwhile payoff.

5. Canons Regular and Retrieval of a Near-lost Dimension to Religious who are Priests

In a construal of life and being that shares a symbolic mindset for understanding the human place in things, the highest form of priesthood is not the parochial minister and the “people’s servant”, but the God oriented man of God, the *hiericus* (priest) as ordered, given-to-God. Hence, a priest committed, explicitly and entirely to God, is at the summit of hierarchy.²³ For that reason too, Eastern rite *episcopoi* were and still are selected from among the religious to serve as leaders of the church in and out of their contemplative metier. These hieromonk-bishops were fully-formed (one hoped) and long-grounded in the mystery of God, and thus, more worthy (*axios*) than careerists pastors to become the enlightened and enlightening leader of the church divine.

It is not just mystagogue-bishops who ennoble the church because they are so ordered to the order of spirit. The order of priests, also so ordered hierarchically to the holy order of spirit, participates at an abridged level in the holy order of spirit along with the bishop. In the Eastern Church the sacred ministers are charged as a company to serve as initiators into mystery, because they live to behold God.²⁴ In the West, then, reinterpreting using a dionysian mindset, Canons Regular were not purposed for the saying of the divine office -- in any functional or task-mastered sense. Their *officium*, their divine service, was constitutive for the order of spirit, in the “divinely ordered nature of things”, rather than specified by a use-decisional slotting for such and such a designated task.

Peter Damian underscores the “eternal” worth of having priests – viz, canons regular – attentive and endlessly attuned to savoring the sacred mystery of God. John Paul II, quoting Peter Damian, seems to resonate with that hieratic rather than functional paradigm when he writes in *Vita Consecrata*, immediately after surveying the apostolic priest-religious type’s charism, he cites the worth of priest-religious who are not by nature apostolic: “Also of immeasurable value is the contribution made to the Church’s life by religious priests completely devoted to contemplation. Especially in the celebration of the Eucharist they carry out an act of the Church and for the Church, to which they join the offering of themselves, in communion with Christ, who offers himself to the Father for the salvation of the whole World.”²⁵ The highlight of this order of priesthood, then, is not

²³ To be more correct, the peak of the hierarchy, in Pseudo-Dionysius, is really the heavenly, cosmic hierarchy rather than the bishop in the ecclesiastical hierarchy.

²⁴ Luibheid, 1987, 236.

²⁵ *Vita Consecrata* 31 n. 57: cf. Peter Damian’s *Liber qui appellatur ‘Dominus vobiscum’ ad Leonem Eremitam*, PL 145, 231-252.

especial service to the people of God in any direct and ministerial fashion, it is, rather witnessing to and fostering divine wisdom.

In an evolutionist perspective it seems that the monasteries', cathedral's and collegial canons regulars' schools of divine service are to be thought of merely as a vestigial hang over, left behind, in the Thirteenth Century, by the rise and development of the universities. Wisdom, then, has changed hats with science. The world of exactness, clarity and distinction has discharged the symbolic and moral world of its having any further tour of duty (thank you very much and good bye). Thus, again evolutionarily speaking, the Dominicans, once canons regular, have replaced their former by-gone predecessors. And, in actual numbers, we can aver to the mummified remains of the old canonical orders. Most, especially after the French Revolution most of these canonical orders have gone the way of extinction, not distinction. And, under the pointed sway of French enlightened urgency, modern historians write off the fact with a sigh of good riddance.

In the post-modern revisitation of "lost carnage" and memories suppressed and partially repressed to the conscious mind, we might argue, now, that the riddance was not entirely *bon* boon. But it is not history or review of antiquities we are attempting here, but rather insight and, perhaps, some service to the human project and life of religious worth. We need not claim that the canons regular vocation and self-understanding of priesthood remains today comparatively stunning and competitively vital in the "job market of available personnel out there" before exploring what viable insight it might still give to developing an alternative awareness and distinctive overtone in the church's rather richly keyed concert of charisms.

6. The parochial assimilation

Canons regular, while never historically averse to the combination of priesthood and religious life, an aversion we sometimes find among the more functionally specialized congregations, have, now, under the current recess of legitimacy, had to redesign and reframe the conversation in which they talk about themselves.

The major bogey the closet is the all devouring blackhole called "parochial assimilation". Congregations are spinning their wheels over the co-optation they have found themselves in by dint of "serving where needed" and critical "priest shortage". They have contributed to the service of the church with great dedication and functional service for years. Now, however, under the pained lack of sufficient recruits, the congregations are finding it less opportune to have large shares of their personnel resources tied up in the parochial ministry.

True enough, Vatican II had given highest weight to the "people of God" and even moved forward, to a central position of importance, the parish as a privileged instance of the church – quite a shift from the more episcopally centered cathedral parish and its liturgy as the controlling model of church.²⁶ With even further emphasis on the rise in

²⁶ Compare SC 42 (parish liturgy) with SC 41 (cathedral liturgy). Also IG 75 with IG 74. The invention of the Conventual Mass by the Canons Regular (noted in IG 76) gains the distinction of honorable mention immediately after citing the cathedral and parochial celebrations of eucharist, that is, because of its place in the church's officium and because of the communitarian and collegiate actualization of church as *koinonia*. Cf. Dom O. Rousseau, "Priesthood and Monasticism," *The Sacrament of Holy Orders*, Liturgical Press, Collegeville, Minnesota, 1962. "Elements of the canonical life very quickly passed into the Benedictine life. The custom of conventual Masses, the more elaborate ceremonial, pontificals for the abbots, and other things, which made the outward life of Benedictine monasteries so similar to that in the foundations of

importance and vocational status of the baptized, the *laos*, in the people of God, stand out as even more central and foundational for the life of the church, not just statistically but theologically. Not to serve this new parochial vision is somehow felt to be cowardly, elitist, or even quisling.

However the pay out -- in honor of parochial service -- has been, in Nygren-Ukeritis's assessment, a loss of identity, a loss of purpose, and a loss of specifically religious worth. The vocation to holiness has been sold out to the need for maintenance and operational crisis in the diocesan church.

In the wake of awareness, due to the Nygren-Ukeritis study, congregations, with a will to reclaim their distinction and charism, have been tackling, each in their own version, the problem of "what we're about" and "where we are to be going". Priesthood looms large, in that context of absolute, pressing "need" satisfaction not as asset but as deficit and liability. Priests "want to" be priests. That is to say, in the reigning model of 'Vatican II Priesthood', priesthood is related to the direct functions of people services and ministrations. Further still, in the ecumenical atmosphere of conversation, "pastoral theology" largely comes down to personal services and intent interest in the lives and hopes of people in the world of real life. Where to find people to serve, "to do ministry", better than in the social organization called parish? Religious priests breathe the post-conciliar air of exasperation: "Since many congregations 'will not survive' anyway, why waste my personal energies on saving a sinking ship, when 'people already even now' need me in the parish. 'I was ordained to service.' Let me serve."

All these references have a clear functional and parochial bias in their favor. They want to identify the priesthood -- as Vatican II tends to want to do -- with the pastoral task of shepherding the flock of the local church parish.

The apostolic congregations have made a good case for the extra-ecclesiastical needs of the church in society at large: the supra-parochial and even supra-episcopal tasks of addressing the domains of culture and education, law and justice, power and peace, youth and social change. All these societal domains shift emphasis off the family honed, territorial unit of 'parish'. A further "clear and distinct" field of endeavor is the 'culture beyond christianity' in what once might have been labeled 'foreign mission', but now includes inter-religious dialog, ecumenical enterprises of unification and hard-nosed search for the truth of the gospel, refugee intervention, disaster relief, and the industrial mission. A "fair enough" question raised to the promoters of such a not-so-ecclesiastically-centered mission is the Kung question, "why priests?"²⁷ When such needs, beyond parish

canons, were largely due to the inspiration of the canonical life... In other matters such as the year of novitiate, profession, ascetical exercises and the practice of silence, the canons for their part felt the profound influence of monastic rules and customs." Rousseau, 173-174.

²⁷ Cf. Hans Kung. *Why Priests?* and also *The Church*, Sheed and Ward, New York, 1967. Edward Schillebeeckx, *Ministry: Leadership in the Community of Jesus Christ*, Crossroad, New York, 1981. Schillebeeckx seems to favor a retrieval of the Chalcedonian condemnation of absolute ordinations.

'No one may be "ordained" priest or deacon in an absolute manner (*apolymentôs*) ...unless a local community is clearly assigned to him, whether in the city or in the country, whether in a martyrdom (burial place where a martyr was venerated) or in a monastery'; then 'the holy council resolves that their *cheirotonia* (*ordinatio* or appointment) is null and void ... and that they may not therefore perform functions on any occasion'. This text displays a clearly defined view of ministry in the church. Only someone who has been called by a particular community (the people and its leaders) to be its pastor and leader authentically receives ordination (I am deliberately not translating this term by 'consecration'). *Ordinatio* is an appointment or 'incorporation' as minister to a community which calls a particular fellow-

and even beyond the provincialism of an overly visible church, loom large, there still remains the question, what does priesthood have to contribute in this “new age”? Aren’t religious people – that is, even lay *christifideles* virtuosi – good enough for such functional purposes?²⁸

7. A reconstructed post-modern world

In this section, I want to sketch briefly some of the methodological problems of appropriating critically a tradition and its destiny,²⁹ in view of present and future direction. The analysis will be altogether too summary, but given the scope of this paper, it would be well to aim for brevity. The problematic we are working with, in discussing priesthood in the Crosier Order, is a distinctively modern problem. It is situated in the historical, modern consciousness which rethinks and assesses. It is also related to experience and, indeed contemporary, recent experience. The issue as problematic would not have attained much prominence prior to the Second Vatican Council, one could argue. Though it would not be true or fair to indict the Council as the cause of the problem or the further accompanying confusion.

Some of the pieces of the puzzle were already in place, at least in scholarly discussion, prior to the council. But the broadened discussion with and since the Council has certainly given priority to the problematic. To cite in a summary fashion some of the items that have had to be revisited: the New Testament data, including the status of non-priest for Jesus, the central importance of ecclesiology and the free giving of gifts or charisms by the Holy Spirit, differing gifts in differing circumstances, the refreshed importance of the laity, an ecumenical appreciation for the common priesthood of all believers, relationship as a central category in discussion of priesthood, leadership, ministry, and community. We can add too the problematic of the non-scriptural term “hierarchy”, noting the influence of both Pseudo-Dionysius as well as the more contemporary purge of ‘hier-archic’ categories through the term’s contact with the social sciences, especially over issues of stratification and inequality with such entailing execrations as ‘priestcraft’, ‘pulpit voice’, ‘churchiness’ and ‘clerical culture’. The issues of celibacy and ordination of women to priesthood, though highly aggravated, at present, do not seem to question radically ordination to priesthood as such. The ecumenical dialogue has pushed questions of diaconate and episcopacy to a more prominent position, thus having an adulterating impact on the presbyterate. Priesthood, especially since Hans Küng, has tended to be thought through as a variant of *diaconia*.³⁰ Presbyter comes to be a more acceptable term – especially given the New Testament evidence for it – though this in turn raised the question of non-differentiation from *episcopos*, especially in the

Christian and indicates him as its leader (or above all in the earlier period, which accepts the actual charismatic emergence of one of its members and gives it official confirmation. [Schillebeeckx, 1981, 38-39]. Vorgrimler critiques this Schillebeeckx position by asserting a less individualistic sense of leadership, and instead valorizes presbyteral incorporation into a collegium. Cf. below.

²⁸ For the reference to ‘virtuosi’, cf. Patricia Wittberg, “The ‘Religious Virtuoso’,” *Pathways to Re-Creating Religious Communities*, Paulist Press, New York, 1996, 19-31.

²⁹ “Tradition and ambition”, as Don M. Randel notes, mark the Chicago style of education as *paideia* and project. Cf. Letter of the President, September 30, 2002, University of Chicago.

³⁰ Cooke, 1976, 343: “Since ‘*diakonia*’ in New Testament usage has this wide application, embracing both common ‘secular’ ministrations and the spiritual ministries proper to Christian faith, life, and worship, it is somewhat artificial to devote a section of our study to ‘service’ in distinction from our treatment of the ministry of the word, or of sacrament.”

Pastoral epistles and Acts. Finally, the history of variant traditions and theologies has raised to a new level of awareness that priesthood, presbyteral ministry, or community leadership – whichever dominant metaphor one chooses to begin with – is not necessarily a univocal term. Each period, each local church, each community of faith tended to shape and reshape its ministry according to rather supple and human classifications and configurations. Antioch, Alexandria, Jerusalem, and Rome each in their own ways configured ecclesial leadership differently.³¹ We need only intimate the difference between Ambrose of Milan's emphases and Chrodegang of Metz's or Thomas Aquinas's, without expanding on them, to notice that there is need to attend to historical variation and development.

Did the 13th Century Crosiers develop a distinctive understanding of priesthood? Of course we don't have much documentary evidence to go on to investigate this question. And, further, it is not our purpose to conduct such an inquiry here. Nonetheless, we can imagine that there is need to inquire. The danger, however, would be one attendant on historicism: viz, by recapturing the past, we achieve the norm for what is to be. Tradition is, in that mode, seen as classicist (it once was there as exemplary), as enviably conservative (what a pity it has been since degraded), and as programmatic criterion (it should be as it was).³² What Gadamer urges in a hermeneutics of tradition, however, is not re-creation, restoration, or pure conservation, but rather an allowance to the tradition to claim and call into question – as a limit and as a possible lost horizon – what is currently all that is the matter. Gadamer, in addition, calls for a critical assessment of the current horizon of interests and received selection that is operative in the interpreter as a fore-knowledge and pre-judgment on what is deemed implicitly as the best. The combining of these two horizons, in hermeneutical understanding, through mutual critical correlation, is what he refers to as a 'fusion of horizons'. Horizons fuse to both create the future as well as to appropriate critically the past, but without trading off the present starting stand-point, with all its noticed prejudices and pre-set leanings. The tradition, thus appropriated, becomes a living tradition through the dialectical back and forth of inquiry and weighing values.³³

We could and should say much more about tradition, historical inquiry, and the present horizon of expectations and values, but let that brief notice suffice.

The invitation of Vatican II to renew, by appropriating origins, sources and vital history in light of present-day challenges, values, and long-term views was, in effect, a commissioning of religious to invent history, to carry on the historic hermeneutic task

³¹ Vorgrimler, 248-253.

³² Hans-Gerog Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, Continuum, New York, 1975, 176-177 & 253-267. We might note, in passing, that charism is often discussed in official church documents under the sway of the classical worldview: the founder's ideal is the one to which we must get back to. Suzanne K. Langer, in a similar vein, refers to the 'genetic fallacy', which implies that beginnings are not only factual but normative and somehow inchoately contain all that is of latter-day worth. Cf. Langer, *Philosophy in a New Key*, Mentor Books, New York, 1951, 210: "There is a widespread and familiar fallacy, known as the 'genetic fallacy,' which arises from the historical method in philosophy and criticism: the error of confusing the *origin* of a thing with its *import*, of tracing the thing to its most primitive form and then calling it 'merely' this archaic phenomenon."

³³ Gadamer, 1975, 273: "In a tradition this process of fusion is continually going on, for there old and new continually grow together to make something of living value, without either being explicitly distinguished from the other."

outlined by Gadamer.³⁴ We remain poised on the cusp on a future history and destiny that remains unsure and more than slightly precarious. Engaging with the historic tradition and, in fact, contributing to transforming the tradition, at the present, marks part of the current agenda in religious life. Not to engage consciously and conscientiously in the enquiry is to disengage or, worse still, to envelop ourselves in a scotosis of obduracy and pertinacity that is just the opposite of stolid perseverance.

In the following remarks, then, I do not claim to be doing good history. A task for which I am ill equipped. It is rather the hermeneutical task of examining and raising to the level of conscious valuation a Crosier tradition of sacramental and collegial priesthood that is currently – that is in the *twilight* shadows of the Enlightenment – not *au courant*, but which, I believe, has an ongoing worth and value for our self-understanding. As long as it remains a shadowy, even embarrassingly closeted trace vestige, however, it does not serve our brotherhood well, nor does it help us appreciate our continued value and religious worth. That the functionalist model of priesthood is currently regnant has its own historical reasons, advocates, and institutional attributes. But it need not stipulate the one and only take on priesthood or, more profoundly, Crosier priesthood.³⁵ We need to advance another vision for priesthood, that is more in keeping with the Crosier charism of communal religious life, if we are to have a viable and distinctive future. To that end, then, of firing an imagination that is sensitive to the longer tradition and the more ultimate horizon and destiny of our life in the Spirit of Christ, this essay serves to offer a devise and occasion for rethinking.

When Gadamer surfaces the issue of ‘effective-history’ he has in mind paying attention to (interpreting) how a tradition plays itself out in future eras and under new

³⁴ Philip Sheldrake, *Spirituality and History: Questions of Interpretation and Method*, Crossroad, New York, 1992. Especially in the first hundred pages of this book, Sheldrake appropriates the hermeneutical tradition to decipher spirituality within historical traditions. Sheldrake underscores the importance of avoiding a Whig view of history, that is to say, that all is progress: whatever comes later is better. He also urges attention to different models of holiness as they co-vary with different models of theology and christology. In particular, using social models of liberation for ballast, Sheldrake notes that there has been an historical tendency to credit the success stories of religious survival with truth. He, then, studies the (near) extinct Beguine movement as a necessary corrective to approved spirituality by papal approbation or male-based referendum.

³⁵ The subconscious and conscious trend to place priesthood and ministry in opposition to community and religious life is a part of the present horizon and empirical experience of late 20th Century Crosiers and other religious as well, that bodes ill for the future of religious life. Ted Keating has noted that such a contradiction and fissure in the hearts of young religious, newly ordained, spells disaster for religious life. Most young religious will opt out because of the debilitating existential tension. Something other than confusion of horizons is needed. Ted Keating, S.M., “The Formation Issues of the Religious Priest: Reflections on a Study,” Typescript format, CMSM, Washington, D.C., n.d. (ca. 1997), p. 8: “Reducing the mission of the institute to providing validly ordained priests for parochial work without regard to renewal of mission and identity for the institute (referred to as *slot filling* in groups today), not only demeans the fidelity to mission and charism that has been emphasized throughout formation years. It deadens creativity in the institute, as satisfaction, personal fulfillment, and role clarity are enhanced by the very behavior that is leading to decline in the institute. Forces of role ambiguity and anxiety that would normally flag to a group that it was in decline and in need of rethinking its mission are softened and anesthetized until it may be too late to turn back. Young members will have been often socialized into a parochial model of mission and ministry. The edge and discomfort needed for conflict and change become anesthetized.”

circumstances.³⁶ Because it is human consciousness that consciously carries out the historical project of furthering the tradition, all history has its future effects and influence. Ideas that are energetic and significant have a way of working themselves out through time. The process of that working out and coming to deeper awareness of what its import is to be, is very close to the meditated, ultimate project of religious life, of which we are a sustaining and contributing, charged part. Crosier priesthood, it is our argument below, will be both in service to a sacramental vision of life and reality as well as deep, conscientiously religious, and concertedly attendant to the dynamics of mystic identification with the holy. Let's work this out.

8. Peter Pincharius: Vestis Nuptialis

There is in the earliest traditions of the Crosier Order a document that somehow 'survived' the Great Purge of 1410, when the General Chapter wished to make a clean sweep on EVERYTHING that came into existence prior to the observant movement of the 15th Century. Peter Pincharius, prior to becoming the 15th Prior General of the Order and, eventually the bishop-elect of the diocese of Speyer, had studied theology at the University where he earned a Doctor's degree in Theology. He lived at the same time as his more famous contemporary John Ruysbroeck, of the Canonia in Groenendaal, and Jean Gerson, chancellor of the University of Paris. His fuller contribution to the spiritual climate of the Order is not entirely clear, but we do have the one surviving document of his opus, the Vestis Nuptialis, the Wedding Garment. To understand Wedding Garment, we need to recall that the "most commented on" book of the bible during middle ages – after Genesis and Psalms – was the Song of Songs.³⁷ And the manner of comment was the allegorical-mystical interpretation, first initiated by the august and ever original Origen of Alexandria, back in the 3rd Century. The classic pace set in the mystical interpretation of Origen's Song of Songs was that of the soul's or the church's nuptial union with God. The medieval commentators on the Song who most contributed to the genre were certainly the Cistercian White Monks, under the inspiration of Bernard of Clairvaux and William of St.-Thierry, but there were a host of other monastic commentators as well.³⁸

Our Peter Pincharius does not select the Song of Songs as the text for comment, in his treatise, but rather a textile, the Crosier Canon's habit. The method and mystic progress, however, are strikingly gauged to fulfill the same programmatic, studied attainment of God in ascent and union that we find in the contemporary nuptial-union literature. Though the mystic union tradition seems to be the most weighty in Pincharius's work, we might cite also John Cassian's allegorical interpretation of the monk's habit as a possible parallel source piece for Pincharius' edification and inspiration.

³⁶ Gadamer, 1975, 267-274. Gadamer highlights that ideas in life history are sated with energy. "There is no such thing as the fundamental power of individuality. It becomes what it is by asserting itself. It is part of the essence of individuality, as of all historical ideas, to be limited by the history of its effect. Even concepts like 'purpose' and 'significance' are not, for Dilthey, ideas in the Platonic or scholastic sense. They too are historical ideas, in that they are limited by the history of their effect: they must be concepts of energy." cf. p. 200.

³⁷ Denys Turner, *Eros and Allegory: Medieval Exegesis of the Song of Songs*, Cistercian Publications, Kalamazoo, Michigan, 1995, 37.

³⁸ Turner, 1995, 202-411 brings together selections from commentaries of Gregory the Great, Alcuin of York, Hugh of Saint Victor, Alan of Lille, Thomas of Perseigne, Thomas Gallus, Thomas Aquinas, Giles of Rome, Nicholas of Lyra, and Denys the Carthusian. In addition, he appends as the apogee of this *Gattung*, John of the Cross's *Spiritual Canticle*.

The book *Vestis Nuptialis* is divided into three sections. The first attests to the purgative method of growth in the spiritual life, away from the passions, sensuous engagement, and sin. The second to the advancement in positive virtues; and the third to union or communion with God in prayer, or better, rapt contemplation. So far, rather standard medieval religious fare.

What grasps our interest in this mid-14th century document is the particular way in which Pincharius conjoins the vocation of the ordained canon and the call to holiness. The first two divisions of the book tie closely the Crosier habit's accoutrements with the first two spiritual movements or phases. The last selects as "mystic matter" the parts of the Crosier habit that are specifically those of the canons qua canons. That is to say, it is the scapular, the cawl, the tunic, the red and white cross of the Crosier "day garment" that come into play as "objects of comment" in parts one and two. When the Crosier enters into his liturgical ministries, wearing the surplice, the clerical tonsure, and the canons' almuce, it is then, that is, in the third part of the treatise, that Pincharius moves to the *Via Mystica* or *Via Unitativa*.

What is the "theological movement" Pincharius is making by reserving the specific selection of canons' clothing for the summit phase of the prayer life? He is certainly not showing that only priests pray, only canons contemplate, only liturgical mysticism crowns the arduous life of ascetic struggle and virtue formation. But, he is averring to the "unitive" sense in which Crosiers at prayer, in religious communion with God, clothed in the grace at their clerical office of prayer and contemplation, put on Christ.³⁹ Crosiers in contemplative liturgical prayer mirror, in their very being, the undifferentiated unity of self atoned, the hierarchic model-witness to the meaning of being alive for all christian life, and a religious calling. We are not dealing here with 'scholastic distinctions' and 'Enlightened divisions of functional competency' spread out differentially for use over the line of clerics, but rather with the symbolist's *via unitativa*. Priesthood and religious life are not severed off from each other in a functionalist and apportioned sense. Priesthood is intimately, uniatly, tied to the liturgical office of prayer and contemplative union. It is not specialties of a social service sort that give meaning to priesthood, or if they do, that is at the surface level of carrying out services. The interior service of God is not other than union with God.

The final pinnacle of the progress in the religious/spiritual life is *quies* or rest. Augustine had long before Pincharius highlighted the stage of Sabbath Rest as the foremost height crowning the new creation.⁴⁰ The Rest at the end point of the creation which God accomplishes on the seventh day is not a slippage into sloth and relaxed, easy, lazy, droning dissipation. Rest is rather the ultimate convergence of vision and participation in the completed new Creation of the New Man, reformed and transformed into the image and likeness of God, rapt into the *visio dei*. Finality, getting to the point of it all, is what Augustinian Rest is about.

A few closing comments on the Pincharius tractate. We should note that Pincharius is not a scholastic, and it might be concluded that the 13th and 14th century

³⁹ Achille M. Triacca, "Methexis in the Early Ambrosian Liturgy," Roles in the Liturgical Assembly, Pueblo Publications, New York, 1981, 233-252. "...in Ambrosian prayer texts *methexis-participatio* includes: union with God thanks to the sacrament, rather than participation in the sacrament itself; a purification or liberation that grounds the faithful once again in what is most real in them and makes them the object of God's love and the locus of his efficacious presence; a configuration to Christ that is brought about by participation in the liturgy; and more specifically, a union with Christ in his paschal mystery, thanks to the eucharist and to the testimony of a life wholly directed to God." [p. 248, underlining mine].

⁴⁰ Glen Lewandowski, "Lectio Divina menurut Agustinus," manuscript, STFT, Abepura, Papua, 2000.

Crosiers in general were more like the 12th Century Renaissance religious / monastic theologians than they were like the schoolmen.⁴¹ Pincharius writes in the old-fashioned monastic style of doing theology. That is, he uses allegory and spiritual interpretation more thorough-goingly than do the scholastics of the universities. The philosophical underpinnings of the Pincharius system are more neo-platonist. Pincharius is more grounded in the fathers (Origen and Augustine in particular) than are the Aristotelian-formed great men of the 13th Century: Aquinas, Duns Scotus, Robert Grosseteste, and even Bonaventura. It is not surprising that Pincharius' book did not make it into the "het beste" list of the high middle ages, just because he was out of date, out of sorts. Leclercq strikes the right chord of interpretation when he says we must understand the monastic trend as distinctive and differently oriented from the university scholastics. Both did theology, but they carried out the enterprise very differently and for different reasons.⁴²

The Monastics read and wrote theology for the sake of religious life; i.e., for the development of their members' lives of virtue and for the sake of knowing God in his beauty. They conducted the study of scripture in the ambiance of the daily liturgy, refracting the mystery and warmth of the living God in the prism of their contemplative lives. The scholastics, on the other hand, valorized truth and scientific accuracy in contrast to the moral enterprise and spiritual priorities of the monastics.

Jean Gerson, the Paris University Chancellor of note we mentioned before, marked out as his 14th century reform program of study in the theological discipline a new wedding of the affective theology with the speculative and intellectual. Since Gerson the division – contrary, apparently, to his intention – between spiritual theology and dogmatic theology came to be a commonplace in the theological curriculum. However, in the likes of our Pincharius, the plea for reunification was not "yet" necessary because the differentiation had not yet been effected in his manner of doing theology, viz., monastic theology.

Pincharius does not appear to be a great theologian. He does not even appear to be an innovative spiritual theologian. His monastic theology is conventional and rather blasé. His allegorizing style might appear particularly annoying in our modern, post enlightenment surroundings. His foibles and inconsistencies, according to van Rooijen,⁴³ are marks of a slovenly sloppiness. Nevertheless the *Vestis Nuptialis* manuscript does give us a window on the pre-reformed, ancient "best" stalk of the home grown 14th century Crosier-style monastic theology. For pleasure and immediate benefit, we'd, perhaps, do better to work through Yan Ruysbroeck or Jean Gerson. Especially Ruysbroeck has the ring of a better and deeper mysticism brewed in the life of a canon regular, long first given over to the pastoral *cura animarum*, before retiring to the vale of a more eremitic lifestyle in canonical contemplation.

But, that Pincharius is not Ruysbroeck or Gerson, does not mean that he is a nobody. Particularly his "theology of canonical priesthood" as a relishing of the God who

⁴¹ The "Twelfth Century" as a unity of culture and experience specifies determinations other than the simple arithmetic 1100 and 1199. Most medievalists, in a less mechanistic manner, would rather use events, such as the Gregorian Reform of 1085 and the 12th Lateran Council of 1215, to mark off the terminus of the spirit and ethos of what constitutes the 12th century renaissance. M. D. Chenu, "A New Era: From Monastic Theology to Scholastic Theology," *Nature, Man, and Society in the Twelfth Century: Essays on New Theological Perspectives in the Latin West*, Jerome Taylor and Lester K. Little (eds.), University of Chicago, Chicago, 1983, 300-309.

⁴² Jean Leclercq, *The Love of Learning and the Desire for God*, Mentor Omega Books, New York, 1962, 189-231.

⁴³ Henri van Rooijen, *A History of the Crosier Order: An Endeavor*, Crosier House of Studies, Fort Wayne, Indiana, 1962, 128-136.

wills to be at one with us stands solidly in the mystic tradition, beginning already with John the Divine.

9. Scholastic Theology of Priesthood: Thomas Aquinas

Marcus Fleischhacker, in exploring the history of the Crosier Order, notes that Crosiers all throughout their history adapted to the times, “suffered” the thoughts and ideas that were current, adjusted themselves to fit with the newest trends.⁴⁴ There are both advantages and deficits to this approach of fitting in. Nevertheless, Fleischhacker wants to indicate that maintaining or even claiming ‘uniqueness’ was, apparently, not the highest value in the hierarchy of choices. Crosiers were not much unlike everybody else. In the era of humanism, Crosiers were humanists. In the era of counter-reformation polemic, Crosiers were polemicists. In the era of mysticism, Crosiers were contemplative. When roman centralism called for uniformity in western liturgy, the Crosiers discarded their own liturgy and began toting breviaries, like every other Jesuit. In the tide of religious educators, Crosiers formed schools and identified with the teaching function. In the wave of mission advance, Crosiers took on missions. Then too, like every other religious, Crosiers assimilated to a parochial identification.

It is not, then, surprising that the Crosier understanding of priesthood should also follow the trend most dominant during the near-millennium long influence of the Dominican Mendicant savant, Thomas Aquinas. It is only with Vatican II’s⁴⁵ modification of that centuries’ long influence that we have a significant breakthrough in reassessing and reconstruing a more biblical notion of ordination.

The Thomistic mind on priesthood concentrated almost entirely on the problem of “sacramental power”. Ordination endowed the priest with power to confect the eucharist and power to absolve sin. These two priestly powers were the specifying distinctions of priesthood and then, too, the motivating reasons for seeking ordination. Priesthood, at its deepest level of exclusive identity, was attached to the mass. Priesthood means obtaining the miraculous, sacramental power of making present the very God-Man by the efficacious power of the sacred words spoken into mere natural matter: a morsel of food-like wafers and a sacral gold-laden chalice of wine. The miracle of priestly power in the confessional was also present in establishing definitively in heaven’s height, an absolute absolution, on earth, of human sins committed in defiance and dishonor of the Great Heavenly God and King of the Universe.⁴⁶ The hyper-hieratic mystique of sacral power

⁴⁴ Janssen, 2002, 22: notes that this sort of modernist interpretation of “routine adjustment” throughout history is actually a more recently revalorized syncretism and eclecticism. “Even the old orders buckle under to the laws intended to determine the structure of the clerks regular. This situation means that everything gets homogenized. Because the clerical congregations are very much attracted into syncretism and eclecticism, every other institute follows along in train. Restoration of a true religious life intends to refer to restoring tradition. And tradition, in this vein, is raised up as highest norm, which may not be challenged. What a pity though, that the tradition to which these restoration efforts refer is little more than the product of the last two centuries prior to the 19th.”

⁴⁵ Most certainly we need to note that the New Theology movement, returning to the sources of the Patristic and Medieval Era, prepared for, in a definitive way, the breakthrough achieved at the Council. Cf. Yves Congar, *A History of Theology*, Doubleday, Garden City, New York, 1968, 227-238; Henri de Lubac, *Catholicism*, Mentor-Omega Book, New York, 1964, xii.

⁴⁶ Cyrille Vogel, “Is the Presbyteral Ordination of the Celebrant a Condition for the Celebration of the Eucharist?” *Roles in the Liturgical Assembly*, Pueblo Publications, New York, 1981, 253-264. It has often been forgotten that Baptism, which could in fact be celebrated by a non-Catholic, for

attached to these two boons to the human race was exclusively tied up with the ordination of priests. Crosier priesthood was, in that long-regnant pre-Vatican II era, without a doubt, cut from the same skein.⁴⁷ @

The impact of the thomist theology of priesthood left its residue in the presumed, unquestioned, pre-understanding among most priests and lay people that priesthood is indeed to be thought of in line with the sacramental power-to-effect framework. No alternatives, that is, no live options, were available. Even the discussion about protestant Anglicans' defective orders ran along the same theological lines. Catholics could breathe a sigh of eternal relief that our line of true apostolic succession was at least entirely valid.

While it is not our intention to denigrate an all-encompassing provenance of the thomistic tradition in Crosier history, it would, in fact be next to impossible to have tried something other, some distinctive non-thomistic approach, given, generally speaking, the non-scientific and not particularly assertorial orientation of the Crosier Canons. Crosier canons were, to use a Winnicott turn of phrase, "good-enough" priests.⁴⁸ They do not, however, throughout the longer history of their existence, prior to the van den Wymelenburg years, seem to have been particularly oriented to the pastoral or parochial ministry. They were, to van Rooijen's mind, not even oriented to a task-determined, ministerial priesthood. They were, more traditionally speaking, more bent toward the contemplative life throughout that era.

This is not to say that they enjoyed an understanding of priesthood, significantly distinctive from the thomist. In fact a thomist theology would handsomely fit with the central and constitutive act of a contemplative priest's life: saying mass. Hearing confessions was certainly a tad unique, among Crosier canons. Harking back to the old canonical institution of Canon Penitentiaries, episcopal appointees having the ordinary jurisdiction of the bishop for absolving sins deemed reserved to his excellency, Crosiers (even 25 year old neophyte ordinands) could enjoy a more unique sacramental role than the ordinary rural, however sage, pastor in the backwoods, by reason of his episcopally-deigned, canonical, quasi-superintending status. Something somewhat unique and, quaintly enough, moderately eccentric. However, the basic thomistic paradigm was nowhere significantly disturbed.

The deficits attached to the scholastic approach were, however, noted and marked at the beginning of the discussions on priesthood at the Second Vatican Council.⁴⁹ First of all the uniqueness of Christ's priesthood came to the fore. Christ alone is priest. His priesthood is eschatological, not historical. The priesthood in the church is certainly a second order priesthood, not the paradigmatic model. The historical, empirical reality, whatever it has come to be, is not the normative model and order. Priesthood in the church must always serve the announcement of Christ's redemptive work. Secondly, the scholastic theology equated the definitive expression of the priesthood in conjunction with the order of presbyter. A bishop, thus, was not ordained so much as appointed to a jurisdiction. The latter role was not definitive nor essential for an understanding of priesthood. A bishop's role was, rather, administrative. This reclamation of a more patristic

example a Jew, a Muslim, a Hindu, or an absolute pagan, was the most fundamental catholic sacrament of reconciliation.

⁴⁷ On the period after the refounding, cf. Janssen, 2000, 84. Again, though, we would want to note that the lengthy history of Crosier self understanding is most probably more variegated than is characatured here.

⁴⁸ Robert Kegan, *The Evolving Self: Problem and Process in Human Development*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1996, 122.

⁴⁹ Kenan B. Osborne, "Ministry in the Documents of Vatican II," *Priesthood: A History of the Ordained Ministry in the Roman Catholic Church*, Paulist Press, New York, 1988, esp. 322-333.

approach proved and proves to be epochal shift for formulating an adequate understanding of the 'priesthood' of the presbyter. The foundational 'ontology' of the presbyter is relatedness – cooperative and in some ways subordinate and dependent – vis-à-vis the order of bishop. A third distinguishing character of Vatican II's preference for a non-scholastic theology takes account of the three-fold character of priesthood. The pluriform nature of 'priesthood', reconfiguring the scholastic paradigm, displaces the one-sided character of a cultic priesthood. *Priestliness* is reconfigured to be one component of a multiple ministerial role: prophet-king-priest. The overall apostolic charge of ministry absorbs the "priesthood" by expanding the parameters outside an overly narrowly conceived cultic, ritualistic specialization. "The scholastic view was one-sided, static, personal; the view of Vatican II is multiple, dynamic, and ecclesiological."⁵⁰ Fourth, the relationship between the ministerial priesthood with the universal priesthood of all believers received significant notice at the council. However, the conciliar document did not satisfactorily resolve the reciprocal interrelation and mutual co-determination articulately enough. Nevertheless the problematic of Chrst's priesthood being paradigmatic, rather than the "presbyter's priesthood" serving as model for "lay" priest's priesthood, developed further in the direction of specifying that there is a priesthood-prophethood-kingship at every concretization of life and ministry among all the baptized people of God. Thus, the scholastic paradigm was judged not so much wrong as inadequate and rather too partial. The reconfiguration accomplished by the Vatican II still leaves further work to be done, both theological and – here more apt to our purposes – personal, in the ongoing, self-revising, redefinition of self-understanding, among Crosiers.

The scholastic turn taken in the 13th Century was willingly and knowingly set aside by the council fathers. Archbishop Marty of Rheims clearly announced the Official Revision Commission's decisive intention to set aside the scholastic eucharistic approach to priesthood:

The commission cannot agree with those Fathers who think the position paper should have followed the scholastic definition of priesthood, which is based on the power to consecrate the eucharist. According to the prevailing mind of this Council and the petition of many Fathers, the priesthood of presbyters must rather be connected with the priesthood of bishops, the latter being regarded as the high point and fullness of priesthood. The priesthood of presbyters must therefore be looked at, in this draft, as embracing not one function, but three, and must be linked with the Apostles and their mission.⁵¹

The reassignment of the cultic "priesthood" to a coordinate and cooperative service role, within the larger apostolic mission of the whole church, with functions of bold leadership, generous prophetic announcement of good news, and also, but not exceptionally more unique than others, sacramental celebration, does reconstitute a presbyterial role in priestly cult as different from what it had been. 'Priesthood' is not as a self-standing monad of unique personal power, importuning on his own competence to confect. The presbyter stands in as the bishop-sealed colleague, sharing the leadership role. He serves as a senatorial community fellow, representative appointee to an excellence-expected leadership in and for the community of believers. He leads, in sacramental wisdom and expectable holiness, the entire community, further and further into their fuller participation in the mystery of Christ, praising God in worship: just as does a bishop-priest.

One can rue the linguistic trappings of still using "priesthood" to cover all this new emphasis. The importation of 'presbyter' still raises eyebrows in both ecclesial and

⁵⁰ Osborne, 323.

⁵¹ Osborne, 316, quoting Archbishop Francois Marty.

academic circles. Certainly the linguistic range of meaning is a bit more neutral and less fixed to a former polity, however off-center the term may seem. But, further, the biblical presbyter has the advantage of noting relationship and connectedness rather than personal status and elevated hierarchical standing in the social pyramid. Leadership, perhaps, comes more to the fore with the usage of presbyter than does prophecy. However, we certainly would not want to substitute the even more handicapped language of 'king' for our 'presbyter-priests' and probably not 'prophet' either. Though 'pastor' comes to be tried on for size as a general cover-all term, that term as well has its histories and burdensome fixities. Whatever the immediate future prospects for the word 'presbyter', we can at least note that there has been a significant ground shift with the second Vatican Council, in many ways still awaiting the tweaks, tugs and wrenching pulls forward called up by the fundamental conciliar revision.

Crosier priesthood, then, though backgrounded by the scholastic-mendicant view of orders, stands now with a new foreground and more complicated task of refining as well as un-stitching and retailoring. Some of the pattern cuts are in view, but the Crosier canon's priesthood (scl. *vestis nuptialis*) will probably need more reworking than just a new hem and reduced piping. Let's try tailoring a new outfit that still, nonetheless, fits our received and reworked tradition.

10. Crosier Priesthood⁵²

When the Crosier Order began in the early 13th Century, the dominant model of priesthood was not a ministerial priesthood, but rather a much more sacral-intercessory and sacramental notion. The Cluniac invention of the feast of All Souls, to wipe out eternal indebtedness to the Highest Magistrate of Heaven, due to sin and just punishment, gave a heightened sense of worth and office to the medieval priest and religious, that we might find hard to imagine in today's less soul-sanctioned world. Priests and religious were vital to the cosmogony of indulgence and purgation.⁵³ The cult of the soul-to-be-redeemed centered on a belief that punishment due to sin needed to be expiated. The mass, which was commodified as of infinite merit and grace fit into the calculus of redemption to address the sickened soul, anxious for its redemption. The "private mass" and "mass intentions" arose as a response to applying the merits and grace of Christ to the named benefactor or intended beneficiary. The multiplication of private masses to be said, on the exact feast date of All Souls, increased the number of donor-beneficiaries who could be sprung from the clenches of sanctioned chastisement and temporal punishment. The offices of monks and canons became tied to the intentions of donors – which intentions, of course, had been pre-schooled in a parsimonious calculus of soul screening.⁵⁴ We need not follow through on the longer *Gattung* of this process all the way through to All Hallows' Eve 1517. Suffice it to say, what the liturgists are now saying, that the harnessing of a liturgical spirituality to a soul-saving piety did not serve well either the liturgy, the priesthood, or the religious life, much less the faith. Even though the Crosier history of the

⁵² Brian E. Daley, "The Ministry of Disciples: Historical Reflections on the Role of Religious Priests," *Theological Studies* 48:4 (1987): 605-629.

⁵³ Norman F. Cantor, "The Cluniac Ideal," *The Civilization of the Middle Ages*, Harper-Collins, New York, 1993, 218-223.

⁵⁴ Robert G. Heath, *Crux Imperatorum Philosophia: Imperial Horizons of the Cluniac Confraternitas*, 964-1109, Pickwick Press, Pittsburg, Pennsylvania, 1976. "One may say that the liturgy of Cluny is saturated with the thoughts of the dead and prayers for their souls. The concern with masses for the dead became so developed that it was proposed that they be said every day, even on Sundays." p. 90.

first two centuries is buried in ruins and ashes, there is no reason to assume that the running themes of priesthood and religious life in those earliest centuries was strikingly different from the conventional cluniac mien. When we say that the early Crosiers fostered a liturgical spirituality, we should not wholly neglect attention to the signs of that contemporary world.

There was, also in the diocese of Liège, during the twelfth century, a new blessed sacrament devotion to the real presence. The feast of Corpus Christi contributed (sic) to the theology of the eucharist an understanding that compensated for no real active participation of the common folk in the eating and drinking of the eucharistic bread and wine.⁵⁵ Visualization rather than consumption became the dominant exercise for a “*spiritual* participation” in the sacrament of salvation. Processions and tabernacles came into being to honor and house the most-high king. Excessive material realism pushed sacramental realism out of the foreground and exaggerated real presence tended to displace actual, viz. liturgical action, presence of Christ in the Eucharist.⁵⁶ According to Dereine’s⁵⁷ dictum that “an adequate history of canons regular would be a history of the liturgy,” we note that Crosier Canons, in spite of the Liègeois trend toward the reification of grace, maintained a full liturgical day order and festive liturgical ceremonial that could not entirely reduce to the more objectifying materialism of Corpus Christi and real presence. In particular, the common celebration of the conventual mass, a corporate and communal liturgical rite, could not but help to keep the ecclesial dimension in the fore. In addition, by celebrating together the liturgy of the hours in routine rounds, among Canons Regular the eucharist would not stand out as a sort of sacramental monism, bereft of a larger communal context and the higher contemplative registers of the spiritual life.

During the Reform Century, 15th Century observantine Crosiers gave special weight to the values of the lay-reform movement in the Netherlands, called the *devotio moderna*.⁵⁸ The 1410 Chapter, in addition, seems to hark back to a larger trend in the movement toward regularization of canons, already present in the 12th Century, that is to say, the trend toward heightening the contemplative dimension of the canons’ religious life.⁵⁹ Whatever the dominant characteristic of the 13th and 14th Century Crosiers may have been, beginning with the 15th Century, the marked emphasis on the contemplative

⁵⁵ David N. Power, *The Eucharistic Mystery: Revitalizing the Tradition*, Crossroad, New York, 1992, 184-207.

⁵⁶ Joseph M. Powers, “The Real Presence and Transignification,” *Eucharistic Theology*, Herder and Herder, New York, 1967, 111-179. Powers notes the contemporary revisionist-sacramentalist effort weighted against the former materialist formulation. “This consideration of the sign-act removes the sacraments from the level of the reified, objectified, or static realities and relocates them within the categories of interpersonal dynamics: the sacraments are personal ‘encounters’ in which God and man reveal themselves effectively to one another, with all that this implies for the full realization of the reality of ‘grace’.” (p. 148)

⁵⁷ Charles Dereine, “Chanoines,” *Dict. D’Hist. et de Géogr. Ecclés.*, Cols. 353-405. “Aussi une histoire fidèle de l’ordre canonial devrait-elle être avant tous une histoire de la liturgie.” (col. 370).

⁵⁸ Ross Fuller, *The Brotherhood of the Common Life and Its Influence*, SUNY, Albany, New York, 1995; Adriaan H. Bredero, “Religious Life in the Low Countries (Ca. 1050 – 1384),” in *Christendom & Christianity in the Middle Ages*, 1994, 319-475; John van Engen, *Devotio Moderna*, Paulist Press, New York, 1988; Stephanus Axters, *The Spirituality of the Old Low Countries*, Blackfriars Publications, London, 1954.

⁵⁹ John C. Dickenson, “Growth of The Contemplative Element,” *The Origins of the Austin Canons and their Introduction into England*, SPCK Press, London, 1950, 72-79.

life seems to have come strongly to the fore. Interiority became highest priority.⁶⁰ Thereafter, and through to the monastic suppression of the late 18th Century, the Crosiers retained a decidedly reflective character as pre-dominant and preferred. The priesthood, in such a regimen, would countenance a sacramental-mysteric and strongly liturgical flavor.⁶¹ The priest's mass would give first expression to his identity as sacerdotal. Though the conventual liturgical offices in common still retained their contextualizing and mediating ecclesial ambience in the overall day order of the community, the inherited doctrine of the scholastic period, counting the powers of consecration and absolution as key to defining priesthood,⁶² tended to keep mass more central and, (regrettably), specifically private mass as keenly devotional.⁶³ As canons, the Crosiers also cultivated their constitutional, close juridical relationship to the bishop, celebrating reconciliation and release for those sinners bound under the rules of absolution reserved to an episcopal canon penitentiary. Further, under the sway of the French School of spirituality, we would even find a rhapsodizing trend, giving weight to the perfervid sentiments of ever increasing devotion and subjective religious emotion. What actual Crosiers, however, experienced themselves during these, the Contempative Centuries of Crosier Life, is harder to gauge, not having documentary evidence to inspect.

With the rescue efforts of van den Wijmelenberg, the Order took a turn toward a Jesuit constitution.⁶⁴ Both in terms of the organization as well as the changed form of describing the purpose of the Order, using, now, a note of mission, the latter day Crosier life has definitely taken the turn toward the modern Enlightenment congregation and the

⁶⁰ van Engen, 1988, 27: "Every aspect of the brothers' and sisters' religious lives from their Christocentrism to their private reading and moral progress turned finally on a deepened 'inwardness' or 'interiority.'"

⁶¹ Vorgrimler, 1992, 269: "But that does not mean that the priest's service can be understood as a mere function; the theological concept of the 'servants of Christ' is not adequately served by a functional minimum. It must meet the demands of a particular spirituality that, at its core, is a Jesus-mysticism."

⁶² David N. Power, "Theologies of Religious Life and Priesthood," *Concert of Charisms*, 72. Cf. also Osborne, 1988, 204-212.

⁶³ Even the fledgling Crosier Theologian, Jerome Rausch, noted, at the Diest Sponsored Symposium on Crosier Spirituality held in 1954, [Lectures on Crosier Spirituality, Fort Wayne, Indiana, 1954, 90-91]: "Doesn't the Missa privata that we fathers have the great privilege of celebrating every day take a great deal away from the centrality of the Missa conventualis? The high point of our spiritual lives day in and day out is not, today, the Missa conventualis, but actually, we have to admit, the Missa privata that we ourselves have the privilege of celebrating. This was not the case in the 'canonical life' of the first '*Kruisbroeders*'. Certainly it seems to make a tremendous difference."

⁶⁴ David Knowles, *From Pachomius to Ignatius: A Study in the Constitutional History of the Religious Orders* (The Sarum Lectures 1964-1965), Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1966. "The Society of Jesus is thus an advance upon the Dominican order in the direction of centralization and firm rule. There is no democratic or elective element whatever in it save for the very occasional choice of a general, when the electoral body, the general congregation, is chosen by a privileged group of professed and officials.... It is at once the end of a process of logical development from the monastic rules and the end of a flight from the monastic conception of the religious life. It is indeed both in character and purpose a new creation. The monastic rule and its mediator, the abbot, existed solely for the spiritual advancement of the community. The monk is indeed the soldier of Christ, but his warfare is internal and unseen. The friars were in this as in other ways a 'mixed' body. On the level of the community the end was the sanctification of the individual, but on the level of the order they were directed towards learning, teaching, preaching, and writing. With the Jesuits, the end of the order as an order is sought and achieved *in foro externo*, by external action, directed by a single head." p. 67.

format and concerns of the clerks regular. Concern to define who Crosiers are as a religious group in the Church, for the sake of ministering to the Church's needs and goals, marks the predominant agenda of this kind of religious congregation. It is telling of the 'signs of the times' that the modern congregations' concerns marked their indenting serration for the guiding grooves that led the second Vatican Council's discussion on religious life. The Council was exceptionally concerned to realign religious life so as to answer to the needs and mission of the Church. Crosiers, somewhat wittingly, somewhat obsequiously, approached the task of renewing their constitutions attending to the new wind of change and the new breath of spirit. What was not envisioned was the large scale, downward turn that ensued. With the resignation of scores and scores of Crosiers (as well as other religious), and the sequential closure of several common apostolates and priories, the malaise and ennui of confusion for those 'inmates'⁶⁵ remaining, there followed for the priest members a trend toward bolstering one of the 'last worthy' reasons for being and remaining. The trend toward parochial assimilation, thus, is not just to be seen as a step forward into the Vatican counseled future, it is also a sign of 'failure of imagination' and 'failure of nerve'. That is to say, if we are to read aright the rejoinder of the purveyors of things religious and priestly, given in the *Concert of Charisms* roundtable. Parochial assimilation, when addressed by the Jesuit-like congregations⁶⁶ wants to find an answer along the lines of "corporate mission other than (just) parish". Van den Wijmelenberg Crosiers would be prone to use the same reigning paradigm to search for their own preferred future and weigh the Crosier charism in the same scales.⁶⁷ "Not good enough," however, would be the monition this essay would want to pursue and explore further.

There are, despite the "Jesuit assimilation" of the 19th Century Crosiers, several marks of the longer tradition that still leave Crosiers not entirely co-opted into the Enlightenment groove. Some signs might seem to be merely medieval and antiquarian, other values, though, have enduring worth and excellence, and stand in need of retention and development.

The Collegial Structure of *Koinonia* for Crosier Priesthood. The first signal value for priesthood Crosiers need to prize is the strong constant emphasis on community. The *koinonia* of apostolic life is not merely a mark of religious life, some monastic conventual convention. *Koinonia* is at the heart of church, it is, further, at the

⁶⁵ The cantankerous G. G. Coulton's favorite title for religious.

⁶⁶ John W. O'Malley, S.J., "One Priesthood: Two Traditions," *Concert of Charisms*, 9-24. "We need to approach it [religious life] as part of the history of ministry rather than exclusively as an aspect of the history of asceticism beginning more or less with Pachomius. The latter approach suggests that ministry is a kind of add-on to religious life. The former indicates that, at least beginning with the mendicants in the thirteenth century, ministry is constitutive of the identity of many of the new Orders." p. 14. Notice the subtle reference to David Knowles book on the different constitutions of religious life.

⁶⁷ Van Rooijen, 1962, 246-258. Cf. also Roger Janssen, *Ordo Salib Suci Melompati Pelbagai Titik Patah 1248-1998*, Sangris Books, Bandung, 2002, 85. "By following the Jesuits, Redemptorists, and such like, the brethren of the Holy Cross begin to hold what is popularly known as parochial missions along with every manner of devotion that attaches to them. ... The Jesuit influence at the time of the restoration of the [Crosier] Order was rather dominant. Several elements can be noted: the Ignatian spirit; the usage of theological handbooks and tractates authored by the Jesuits company; the Jesuit retreat format; a Jesuit advocacy for the Order during the scandalous litigation begun by the defector, confrere van Boldrik, of St. Agatha Monastery, carried out both in the press as well as before the Vatican Tribunal, regarding the Crosier Indulgence; a Jesuit manner of understanding both apostolic mission to society as well as of obedience to the Holy See."

base of understanding *presbyterium*.⁶⁸ The overly functionalist concerns of the Enlightenment to sketch out what does a priest (or better an individuated presbyter) does, searches out task assignments, social settings in which to do these, and accountability structures to which to report and give evidence of accomplishment. The functionalist trend, further, tends to be individualist, activist, and strongly oriented to the monarchic leadership function in organizations. The emphasis on *presbyterion* in the pastoral epistles, however, gives weight to the values of collegiality and corporate wisdom.⁶⁹ The *presbyterium* is not a congeries of individual sacerdotal-functionaries, but rather the senatorial body, the elders' council (*zek^enim*), at the service of deliberating the common concerns of the communal church. Certainly all throughout the pastoral epistles, it is the very local church that stands to the fore. There are, however, outside the pastorals, issues of a broader order and demanding a wider wisdom. Specifically the council taken in the Jerusalem Church (Acts 15), which incorporated the local (?) presbyterial elders' senate of the most sage Jerusalem assembly, concerned the much larger-than-local issue, viz. regarding the gentile mission, the spiritual-interpretation of the mosaic law, and the theological advisability of cultural variation.⁷⁰ It is this collegial identifying sense of priesthood-in-an-order of wisdom that was safeguarded best among the canons (secular) and found and finds its distilled essence among the Crosiers as a collegially organized chapter of canons.⁷¹ Other presbyterial-collegial bodies that perhaps realize this corporate aspect of priesthood would include the synodal structure of the eastern churches, the synodal-counciliar structure of the entire ecumenical Catholic Church, and the cardinalate structure of the apostolic see's advisory councilium. For the Crosiers, it is chapters, as community events, corporate bodies for deliberation, and especially wisdom fellowships, gathered in Spirit, that mark and retain the ancient and original emphasis on priesthood as

⁶⁸ *Presbyterion* appears in the Pastoral Epistles (I Tim. 4.14), in a chance, by the way reference. The cultural background of the Jewish council of elders (*zek^enim*), stands behind the Jewish-Christian institution. Wisdom in the body of Christ is embodied in the composed wisdom community of the gathered wise. The wisdom function stands out as key in understanding the constitution of the *presbyterion*. L.S. Thronton, *The Common Life in the Body of Christ*, Dacre Press, London, 1944, 307: "The unity of the Body is divinely grounded and furnished. Yet constant vigilance is required to secure it (Eph. 4.1-7). Accordingly the saints are to be equipped through teaching and pastoral care. The work of the ministry is essentially one of 'edification'. The Body of the [*sic*.] Christ needs 'building up' with the right kind of nourishment."

⁶⁹ It is too complicated a theme to develop here how the "presbyterian" trend of the Calvinist branches of the church explicates the powerful presbytery as both laic and disciplinary. Calvin, *Inst.* IV.iii.8 & IV.xi-xii. "...when the occasion demands it, every one of the brethren must endeavor to chastise his brother. Those most charged to carry out this disciplinary task, however, are the pastors and the elders, whose obligation is not only to preach to the congregation, but also to chasten and reprimand in each household, if their general teaching does not achieve sufficient results." (IV.xii.2). "The leaders [Rm 12.8, I Cor 12.28], to my understanding, are to be men of advanced age, who are chosen from among the members of the congregation, to give – along with the superintendent of the congregation – reprimands and to carry out the law of discipline. Since its beginning, each church had a senate or council, which was constituted by persons, at once devout, staunch, and holy, who were given the competence to rectify evils." (IV.iii.8).

⁷⁰ Günter Bornkamm, Paul, Harper Row, New York, 1969, 31-42.

⁷¹ David Lepine's chapter on "A Brotherhood of Canons Serving God: Life in the Close, The Corporate Identity of the Chapter," (180-190) in his book *A Brotherhood of Canons Serving God: English Secular Cathedral in the Later Middle Ages*, The Boydell Press Woodbridge, St Edmundsbury Press Ltd, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk, 1995, outlines the weak collegial bonds of the non-residenciaries and the strong corporate bonds of the residenciary canons in English Church.

collegial presbyterion.⁷² While the proffered form of priests senates and pastoral councils are the Vatican's up-dating ways of finding collegial structures for diocesan clergy, these forms are not to be seen as exhaustive of the collegial model. Certainly there remains some wisdom also in the thirteenth century break-through, made by the mendicant orders, claiming a more-than-local extension for the churches concerns, diplomacy and ministries.⁷³ Exemption from the local episcopal ordinary was not to be seen as asseveration (only), but also availability for another form of service and a larger scaled wisdom.

It is usually the prophetic theme that comes to expression when dealing with this sort of valuable difference-within-communion. What I would want to argue is that the presbyterial collegiality and collegial structures are not only good for the local church, though they may have arisen and grown up there, but also for underscoring religious' understanding of priesthood as much more than conjoined or composite functional services.⁷⁴ The canons regular have a strong attachment to chapter,⁷⁵ much more so, than, let us say, the Jesuit's complete dismissal of chapters and their substitution with "general congregations". These canonical chapters are not just religious life events, as, for example, the Benedictine Order's chapters. For Crosiers they are presbyterial experiences.⁷⁶ These give meaning to the identity of Crosier presbyters as collegial men

⁷² B. Botte, "Collegiate Character of the Presbyterate and Episcopate," *The Sacrament of Orders*, The Liturgical Press, Collegeville, Minnesota, 1957, 75-97.

⁷³ The impact of the Dominican Constitutions on the Crosier Constitutions of 1248 is more than just a little. Almost the entire substance of the Dominican Constitutions was simply lifted and copied. The elements that retained the canonical character among the Crosiers has been studied in M. Vinken, OSC, novice master at Diest, [Commentary on the Constitutions of the Canons Regular of the Order of the Holy Cross, trans. By John Klaver OSC & Bernard van Gils OSC, Mimeograph format, n.d., 2-4]. Vinken points out the special peculiarities retained by the Crosiers as canons regular, in contrast to the mendicant Dominicans. Of special interest for us here, however, is the mendicant emphasis on the preaching mission as eminently compatible with the exempt status and sending out of the friars two by two (Lk 10). The Crosier canons, although exempt (as were the Cluniac monks), retain a more communal and collegial character (Acts 2 & 4). Vinken highlights the contemplative character of the first Crosiers, in contrast to the preaching mission of the Dominicans. One could also note the contrast of an ecclesial mission in community and a mission in twos. When community life is emphasized, the mission will always tend to be more local and regional, relational, customized and contextualized. Whereas the universalizing trend tends to make mission trans-local, global, thematic, cross cultural and orthodox. When Crosiers live and work locally, because of their conspicuous acceptance of local community as prominent and salient, the universalizing tendency would more generally occur in and out of the local committedness.

⁷⁴ Cooke, "Ministering to God's Judgment," 1976, 405-521. Cooke notes, within his disquisition on the ministry of discerning good judgment, only three occasions where collegiality comes into the picture. The discussion, further, is always in regard to episcopal collegiality and tends to focus on doctrinal issues of orthodoxy and disciplinary issues of major fission and heresy. Clearly, discretion in matters of common life entails that there would be other arenas where wise communal discernment is necessary, other than just in the area of official doctrine and reversal of malfeasance.

⁷⁵ Crosier Constitutions, 8.1 & 2.

⁷⁶ I do not, by that, mean to slight the importance of incorporating brother members in the deliberations and obligations of coming to common wisdom in chapter (cf. Crosier Constitutions, 9.3). But that deference does not, then, eradicate the rootedness in a priesthood of collegial, capitular structures, nor a conviction that the presbyterial order is intimately and essentially to be identified with council, decision-making, and finding reasons for being faithful. These presbyterial roles, however much they are not exclusive, contribute to an understanding of the meaning of

of wisdom, searching out the depth of God in common.⁷⁷ Chapters are not just business meetings, in the Crosier tradition. Much like the synodal system in the Eastern churches, which functions in many ways to displace the Western churches pride of place given to law, Crosier Chapters are constitutive of our way of life. It is chapters, we note in the constitutions, that determine our various apostolates, not a mandatum, not the “founder”, not the origin of our company. Synod-like chapters deliberate in order to lead and set direction because they are authoritative, substantive and relational. This difference (*viva la différence*) from the clerks regular, impinges directly on an understanding of priesthood as corporate, deliberative, responsible, and leading by ideas. Our priests, then, are not just those who carry out decisions instrumentally, are not ministers acting in behalf of other decision-makers, are not functionaries of someone higher up the hierarchy. These Crosier “chapter fathers” are exercising priesthood as wisdom and collegiate decision.

A correlate to this item, I think would be well to put forth here. If we look at the ordination rites for bishops, deacons and presbyters, we find that the ministerial functions of deaconal order are specified, as are the specific leadership roles of the episcopal order. When we come to the presbyters, however, the kind of “function” we find is rather virtue: a hoped for evidencing of moral excellence (*conversatio morum*).⁷⁸ At first view this seems strangely odd. Where is the Scholastic’s empowerment to confect the eucharist and shrive the sinner? The old Roman prayer of presbyteral ordination, using the old Roman Republican mind, set out an exemplary leadership, virtuous witness, and moral duty (*officium, ministerium, munus*), harking back to the stoic’s sort of praxic admonitions given out by Ambrose (*de officiis ministerorum*) and Gregory (*liber regulae pastoralis*). This

presbytery that is not so available to the functional paring into tasks and parsing according to job descriptions. It also explains the necessity for a theological education trimmed to wisdom rather than ministerial tasks alone.

⁷⁷ Caroline Walker Bynum, *Docere Verbo et Exemplo: An Aspect of Twelfth Century Spirituality*, Harvard Theological Studies XXXI, Scholars Press, Missoula, Montana, 1979. Bynum notes how the great influence of Gregory the Great on the Canonical Movement of the 12th Century gave differential prominence to the canons’ spirituality of teaching by word and example. Canons were not only, like the monks, concerned about attaining their own salvation, though they were that as well, but about evidencing the mystery of salvific love and wisdom by their words and behavior. While Gregory the Great (Pastoral Care), the apparent original conceiver of the idea, tends to emphasize the preaching task – entailing both word and personal example – the canons did not so much emphasize the preaching function as the exemplary way of life. “Gregory’s idea that the pastor or preacher should lead or teach his flock *tam exemplo quam verbo* becomes central in conceptions of the clerical vocation in the Middle Ages.” (Bynum, 16). Finally, Bynum concludes that the canonical authors do not equate clerical status and apostolic life (*vita apostolica*) either with the preaching function or with the care of souls (*cura animarum*). Edification is the mark of their religious life and mission. It is in attitudes and assumptions that canons differ from monks. This attitude of edification (*oikodomê*) or community building as both purposive ministry and as expressive of religious conviction is as old as Paul. (Bynum, 21).

⁷⁸ The presbyter is ordained to counsel. Counsel stands out as the most significant virtue invoked in the rite of ordination. Paul F. Bradshaw, *Ordination Rites of the Ancient Churches of East and West*, Pueblo Publishing Company, New York, 1990, 58-70. From the Leonine Sacramentary (quoted by Bradshaw on page 218), we find the Roman ordination formula, adopted by the newly revised rite for the order of presbyters. “May they obtain and receive from you, O God, the office of second dignity, and by the example of their conduct may they commend a strict way of life [*censuramque morum exemplo suae conversationis insinuent*]. May they be virtuous colleagues of our order. May the pattern of all righteousness show forth in them, so that, rendering a good account of the stewardship entrusted to them, they may obtain the rewards of eternal blessedness...”

emphasis in the ordination rite of presbyters underscores how the vision of the presbyteral role was more clearly prudential than functional, more attuned to a gentlemen's gerontocracy than a neomistic frenetic activity, more ordered to aristocracy⁷⁹ than aimed at meritocracy. One could say that the presbyter is ordered and appointed to good judgment.⁸⁰ Again, we are not prizing these emphases in a naïve restorationist sort of sense. But we would hold, with Levi-Strauss, that such near mythic ordination formulae are "good to think with." @

The *presbyterion*, in this perspective, is less a deaconally specified working group of ministers charged each, according to the institutional division of labor, with his own territorially defined task and responsibility. The *presbyterion* is a wisdom community. The most major ordering of the *presbyterion* is to deliberation and good counsel. All that philosophy and theology studied is intended not to equip for some one or another job, but to the development of mind, heart, and will.⁸¹ In the Crosier perspective the ordering of mind and will has its natural outlet in chapter and council. While not all are councilors, chapter deliberation entails the power of initiative and idea as emerging from the group-as-wise.⁸²

Stanley Hauerwas, Methodist theologian, urges that what is needed in moral theology today is not some better profile of task assignments, spelling out specifics of what is to be done, but rather a narrative description of what kind of persons we want to be. To that end the ruling deontic forms of conducting ethics need to give way to a more wholesome aretaic mode of sharpening our acuity for virtue, in the manner of the Catholic tradition.⁸³ What we have in the ordination rite's prayer for presbyters seems to fit well with this virtual sense of presbytery. It is not functions and role tasks that get spelled out, but rather the exemplary kind of excellent persons we wish them to be, as cooperators-by-council, prudent counsel, of the episcopal order. Such a denuded description of the presbyters – all presbyters – would, of course, be little other than an antiquarian come back to the old Roman *collegium* or the medieval closed-circle of canons at the cathedral chapter making their sway felt in deliberations and decisions. When the United States ecclesial organization became definitely ordered, the European institution of cathedral canons, as *ex officio* councilors to the bishop, was deliberately dropped in favor of an organizational model of chosen diocesan consultors. Crosier canons regular, in the United

⁷⁹ Voegelin, 1983, III:70. "Not only the good polis is man written large, but every polis writes large the type of man that is socially dominant in it."

⁸⁰ Justus Buchler, *Toward a General Theory of Human Judgment*, Dover Publications, New York, 1970. Buchler, following in the American Pragmatic trend, especially Dewey, notes that good judgment has to do with developing the dogmas of common sense. (Buchler, xxiii). Lonergan also notes the high desideratum of a developed sensibility and good judgment. Our reference here, however, is not to the training of good judgment so much as to the Roman rite of ordination which prays a spirit of counsel to encompass the ordinand. That the presbyter is ordered to the spiritual register of wise counsel is not, particularly since the enlightenment's preponderant preference for function, a theme that stands out as prominent in current literature.

⁸¹ Voegelin, 1983, III:209. Critias satirizes the utopian rival order of degenerate Atlantis with the wise order of Athens, the good society. "For the dream of Utopia, that is, the dream of achieving the perfect society through organizing men according to a blueprint instead of forming them in an educational process, is a serious affair; it is something like the black magic of politics. Most appropriately, therefore, the dream of Atlantis rises in luciferic splendor."

⁸² Crosier Constitutions 8.1 & 15.3.

⁸³ Stanley Hauerwas, *A Community of Character: Toward a constructive Christian Social Ethic*, Notre Dame University Press, South Bend, 1983; Stanley Hauerwas, *Character and the Christian Life: A Study in Theological Ethics*, Trinity University Monograph Series in Religion, San Antonio, Texas, 1985.

States in contrast to Europe, have lost the secular reference group (viz. canons secular) from which the regular religious group (canons regular) differentiated. While that lost reference group may make for its own problematic, the historical alloy of canons, nevertheless, does contribute forthrightly a particular collegial structure, still alive and thriving, among the canons regular, to the broader theological problem of re-defining priesthood after the Council in its more collegial sense. Crosiers give evidence of this presbyteral dimension, both in their capitular structure, in the conventual liturgy and in their emphasis on brotherhood and *koinonia*.⁸⁴

Koinonia itself, further, may seem more like a “religious thing” than a presbyteral thing, under the present circumstances of discussion. Especially since the General Board October 2001 Statement, that community life is of the essence and at the heart of the Crosier charism, one might be tempted to assert that it is just the “brother element” in our outfit that realizes the part of community, whereas the “priest element” embodies the apostolic, in a distinctive, ministerial manner. We note, however, koinonia deserves the service of “men dedicated to community”. It is just this element of serving the ecclesial mark of communion, as priests, by being community men, that stands out in John Paul II’s Apostolic Exhortation, delivered in concluding the synod on priest formation. He writes that forming community and living community itself contributes to the mission of the church in service of full human community. Human community serves, by embodiment, the high ecclesial value of unity. John Paul judiciously writes:⁸⁵

Especially important is the ability to relate with ones fellow human beings. This is a fundamental precondition for a person called to responsibility for the church. He is called to be a community man. ... Persons today are very often trapped in situations of conformity and loneliness, especially in large cities. They are increasingly coming to prize the superb value of common life. This common life, then, today, stands out as the obvious sign and most effective means to convey the gospel message.

Certainly such emphasis on the leader as a man in service to unity and community can well apply to the ministerial and functional sense of priesthood. A priest must be a unifier and a community builder. He must bring together into a unity, conflicting bodies and principles. He attends to helping different parties hear each other out. He arbitrates in dispute. He seeks peace and concord. He builds good will and tolerant acceptance across

⁸⁴ For a fine study of secular canons, see Lepine, 1995. Lepine helps place the institution of secular canons in proper ecclesial perspective. Canons were largely involved in organizational and administrative tasks. These canons were not, for example, pastoral men, as is sometimes supposed, attending to a *cura animarum*. Lepine notes: “Cathedrals did not serve as parish churches.” “Although cathedrals were primarily private churches of their clergy whose liturgy required no congregation, the laity were encouraged to attend from an early date. The laity’s first loyalty remained to their parish churches.... They visited in large numbers as pilgrims to their [the cathedrals’] shrines, encouraged by the spiritual benefit of the many indulgences granted by successive bishops and popes.” Cf. Lepine, 15, n. 83.

⁸⁵ Pastores Dabo Vobis no. 43. I am translating from the Indonesian text published as Seri Dokumen Gerejawi, No. 25: DokPen KWI, Jakarta, 1992. Detailing the virtues of the priest as “man of community” (*insan persekutuan*), the document cites as most important the human relations skills needed: affective-sexual maturity, an ability to associate as a brother and to form friendships, as well as conscientiousness, accountability and a keen sense for responsibility. Community building skills and virtues, then, are seen to be at the service of the eschatological, universal community of all human kind, anticipated ‘proleptically’ in the human community of the concrete actual church, as *sacramentum mundi*. Community is a sacrament of the final new world to which all humankind is called. The priest builds and lives community at multiple levels of societal life.

ethnic lines and between interest groups. He forges consensus, etc. These functional models of consensus-leadership are no longer new to most priest pastors. And they are not to be ignored. However, the embodiment, one could even say the sacramental embodiment of communion, that marks canonical life, in fact, accents the older leaderly style of dealing with energy for community. It is this signal sense that John Paul underlines in his *Pastores Dabo Vobis* monition to priests-in-training for community leadership: “Live it.” “Gain skill by participation.”⁸⁶ That sort of ideal matches the great bishop Augustine’s foundational concern for building a community of life among his cooperators and councilors.

While we need not naively urge that bishops don’t know what they’re missing by not having communal canons close by in their esteemed chanceries of excellency, there is, though, a familism and communal sense missing in a church ordered too massively by bureaus and buttons. Crosiers are not, I think, overly anxious to become chancellors and episcopal delegates in droves – other than, perhaps, in our mission areas where diocese and mission were not strongly differentiated (viz., Bandung, Agats, Butembo). There is something distasteful to the “regular” spirit for it to assume the active duties and burdens of those closest to the bishop. Again, however, “to think through” the primacy of *koinonia* as an essentially priestly charge, in order to get the kind of people we want as communal priests, is of sure benefit to the future of a Crosier priesthood dedicated to building community.⁸⁷

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A Sacramental Self-Understanding for Crosier Priesthood. In addition to the canonical emphasis on collegial identification for Crosier priests, there is, further, a vibrant sense of sacrament incumbent to the identity of Crosiers. Whereas the priority of collegiality was rather easier to negotiate in accord with the self-understanding of post-Vatican II priests, the sacramental approach has a few more hurdles to maneuver.⁸⁸ At first blush the emphasis on the priest as human sacrament of the God beyond might sound pretentious and excessively bold. There are even overtones of brash vanity and brazen pride. It is not, then, without some appropriate caution that we proceed.

We begin with the retrieved theology of sacrament discovered during the resurgence of patristic studies, centering in the Nouvelle Theologie movement. Before we discuss the seven-fold sacramental system of the later church, these theologians aver, we need to appropriate a sound sense of Christ as THE fundamental sacrament of God, the primordial sacrament (*Ursakramentum*). All reality, indeed, is sacramental in that it breathes the word of the divine. God, in his wanton, lavish love, has always been about making himself known and noticed. He is preeminently good. His self-expression, as word, creates and sustains everything and everyone. God’s inner mystery is revelation

⁸⁶ Cf. *Pastores Dabo Vobis* no. 60-62.

⁸⁷ Crosier Constitutions 0.3.

⁸⁸ One would want to avoid, in principle, the sort of understanding that is used to identify a ‘promotional spirituality’ of the Crosiers with something like the spirituality of the sacramentarian congregation. These congregations categorized by ‘their’ spirituality, that is, founded to promote a distinctive spirituality – just as other groups were founded to carry out a distinctive apostolic work – are also rather late inventions in the religious life history. Cf. Adolphe Tanquerry S.S., *The Spiritual Life*, Desclée, Tournai, Belgium, 1930, xliii-xlviii; Pierre Pourrat S.S., *Christian Spirituality*, The Newman Press, Westminster, Maryland, 1955, IV:469-527. What we, rather, have in mind is closer to Karl Rahner’s distinction between categorial and transcendentalist approaches to faith analysis. Karl Rahner, “On the Relationship between the History of Universal, Trancendental Revelation and Special, Categorical Revelation,” *Foundations of Christian Faith: An Introduction to the Idea of Christianity*, Seabury Press, New York, 1978, 153-161.

and disclosure. The most unguarded self-disclosure of Love Almighty is made known in Jesus, the palpable and crowd-arresting Man of God. Jesus is God's sacrament. John's Gospel fosters the fondest formulation of this sacramental explication of Jesus (1.18). But it also echoes throughout the paeans hymning the ikon of God in Colossians and Ephesians. Wisdom literature, in Proverbs, Sirach, and the Wisdom of Solomon, also celebrates the sage God of subtle disclosure, in poems celebrating unmistakable wisdom and playful discernment. God glories in becoming obvious and conspicuous.

Jesus is the primordial sacrament of God just because he is so obviously good, genuine, and attractive. All that God wants to be, Jesus is. Jesus is the open window peering into the heart and depth of God (I Cor 2.10). Jesus is a deep-structured man of Spirit. He exegetes the mystery of who God is by his life and action, by his relationships and concerns, causes and engagements. Jesus astounds and amazes his fellows into insight, sometimes by inverse insight.⁸⁹ Sacraments baffle and bedazzle. There is an aesthetic approach to symbolic wealth of reality available through sacrament surplus of meaning that cannot reduce down to a one-dimensional, instrumental utility. Jesus is most available when there remains an pellucid aura of the mystic he was and is. Jesus bleeds into always more than expected. Just like God.

That said, we would urge, further, that there is a mediational role still incumbent on the sacramental priesthood. It may seem quaint and old-fashioned to aver that Crosier priests need to mirror and make brilliant the radiant translucent God of Light. Certainly there could be read a sort of triumphalism to this sort of exquisite effulgence. But that has always been the risk behind cataphatic and eminent approaches to speaking of God. Nevertheless, it is this sort of intuition into the human role of radiating what God would want to convey that marks the deepest vocation and mission of the priest. We could expand on the priesthood of all the baptized and even moreso of the sainted devout. What we are trying to do here, however, is not so much an analysis of the "specific difference" of the ordained priest, but rather a hint and disclosure of the infinite possibility of display that attaches to the myth of priesthood when sacramentality rather than function serves as the starting point and ever richer thesaurus of the profound impression God makes.⁹⁰ It is celebrating priesthood in a new key, perhaps, to heighten the dazzle rather than equalize and topple the excellencies, reducing them down to a generalized amalgam. It is just such

⁸⁹ Bernard J.F. Lonergan, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*, Harper and Row, New York, 1978, 54: "For an inverse insight has three characteristics: it supposes a positive object of inquiry; it denies intelligibility to the object; and the denial runs counter to spontaneous anticipations of intelligence."

⁹⁰ Jean Daniélou, "The Priestly Ministry in the Greek Fathers," *The Sacrament of Orders*, The Liturgical Press, Collegeville, Minnesota, 1957, 116-130. "...what is the purpose of the ministry in the Christian Church. Now the answer to this question seems clear. There is an economy of salvation which is both revelation (*λογος*) and action (*εργον*). It is the work of the divine power (*δυναμις*). Its end is the edification (*οικοδομη*) of the people of God. Ministers are the servants of this economy; they are, in St Paul's words – which seem to me to provide the most accurate definition of their work – 'the dispensers (*οικονομοι*) of the mysteries (*μυστηρια*) of God' (I Cor. 4,1). The ministry is defined essentially by its role in the history of salvation.... The purpose of God's design, ... is the restoration of the image of God in man." p. 117. We should note here, for clarity, that the mysteries of God, often translated into Latin by *sacramenta*, would rather include all the symbolic gestures of grace and evident favor associated with the "general" definition of sacrament outlined above. It is not enough, then, to think of priestly ministry as 'dispensing the (so-called seven) sacraments'. Priestly ministry – under the pauline sacramental-mysteric model – is rather a concerted dimensional and perspectival service, a maieutic assistance, an evocative responsibility yoked to "opening up the world to the transcendence" of all that is Holy.

leveling, such collapsing and reduction, however, of the sacramental that does too much damage to the glory of God.⁹¹ The spirit of life is exceedingly diminished when the flair and resounding ring of God, in all his glory, diminishes to something merely useful for present structures and institutions: even church organizations. It is the everlastingly more glorious, then, that God is exhausting himself over, in the Master Mystagogue Jesus, and importuning, further, on Jesus' apprentice-aides. Leading into all mystery (John 16.13).

Priesthood explored as service of sacramental reality in the sacrament of orders, then, cannot be delimited to a description of the powers and functions that are appropriate to the job. The rite of Ordination is primarily an imprecation, with the gesture of imposing hands and spirit on the candidate for public witness and dedication to the cause of God's revealing self-expression. The gathered church implores God to infuse his spirit once more on this person, to further and again reveal what God is all about for the human race. The charism of the Spirit is not to be limited to the canonical assignment meted out by the ordinary for tomorrow's work to be done. Certainly there should be in view benefit to the church's edification, when celebrating this display of God's charism and sacramental outpouring. There are, however, better, more business-like, and more rational ways to detail jobs and work assignments than a three hour liturgical rite of sanctification and dedication. The liturgy of orders intends to deliver over to God "this chosen one" for the most sacred duty of echoing God's reign and presence in our world today. There is an imaginative and symbolic opening of the church to God in power, that has little (though not nothing) to do with social or political power. The symbolic empowering of the chosen candidate is at the level and order of spirit disclosure rather than the level of societal order or institutional maintenance. The rite intends to make of this human being an obvious spirit person (*rohaniwan*). It seems too often, to this reader, that the functional specs, laid out for the contemporary priest, stem more from the level of *psyche* than *pneuma*⁹² in much of the contemporary church's discussion. What is wanting is a more refreshed sense of the spiritual to which the priest is ordered. As a sacrament of the Glory of God, there needs to be a spirituality of honing and fine-tuning the person-as-symbol. And, of course, that action is what the spirit's infusion is meant to accomplish through orders, for

⁹¹ Gloria dei homo vivens. Irenaeus of Lyons reveled in the excellence done to humanity when God takes on as his life-long project getting people elevated to their best. Voegelin, 1983, III:275 writes: "One of the finest formulations of the problem of faith occurs in a fragment of his [Aristotle's] work *On Prayer*, on occasion of the mystery-religions: 'Those who are being initiated are not required to grasp anything with the understanding [*mathein*], but to have a certain inner experience [or passion, *pathein*], and so to be put into a particular frame of mind in the first place.' The *cognitio Dei* through faith is not a cognitive act in which an object is given, but a cognitive spiritual passion of the soul. In the passion of faith the ground of being is experienced, and that means the ground of all being, including immanent form. Hence, it is legitimate to symbolize the ground of being through immaterial forms, like the Platonic Idea. Being can be experienced either in its world-immanent articulation or through the *pathein* of the soul in openness toward its ground; and for expressing the relation between transcendental and immanent being we have no other means than the analogical use of terms derived from our experiences of immanent being. . . . The relation between transcendental and immanent being, as we just indicated, can be symbolized only analogically."

⁹² Paul's letter to the Corinthians complains of the same reduction of spiritual meaning and gifts (*pneumatika*) to the level of organizational and establishmentarian needs, ordered by mind and calculating reason, the common-place penchant of the learned (*psychichoi*) Corinthians. That lower level will not do, Paul argues, for the purposes of God's spirit and plan (*mysterion*). God wills a finer than a smaller mind, a higher and even highest level of spiritual sensitivity (*teleioi*), something rather unavailable to the assessment (*anakrinetai*) of the small of spirit (*sarkichoi*). Cf. the discussion and quarrel throughout I Corinthians 2-4, but especially in chapter 2 and early in chapter 3.

the good of the whole body, for the attuning of the entire church to matters of spirit. The gift is not personal in an exclusive sense, but personal in an inclusive and enhancing sense. It edifies all persons to participate by rite in higher degrees of the fullness of spirit.⁹³

Now then, after construing the priesthood under the broadening scope of a mysteric sacramental canopy, noting both Jesus' primordial sacramentality and the broad sacramental sensitivity necessary for a church attuned to the higher registers of Spirit, if we only then add a functional analysis for the service of priests to the sacramental life of the church, perhaps we can avoid a too instrumental and distributor-marketing sense of priests' attachment to dispensing sacraments. Priests as gifted, spirit-ordered spirit-men, are to celebrate the particular sacraments out of and under the impress of God's Spirit. It is not – in this model – a matter of “powers” to confect and absolve, nor even jurisdiction to head up a parish that is key. What counts is aiming to convey what God in his obvious goodness is urging to express and promote for the human community. Not good enough: “reading mass”. Not stunning enough – for God's purposes: a right to preach. Spiritual savor needs to stand behind and implode within the rites over which the sacramentally-sensitized, liturgically learned Crosier priest presides. Not good enough divvying up jobs all around to the varied ministers. The task of presider entails impressing on all their spiritual demeanor and role. It should be clearer now, that there is still vitality and energy for a symbolic-sacramental understanding of priesthood that is not, then, to be reduced to the functional and institutional.⁹⁴

The merit of this sacramental approach to Crosier priesthood is that it is at least more spiritually based than primarily functional and institutional. It can certainly be granted that it is not the whole picture of priesthood, even Crosier priesthood. Nor need it be read to denigrate a functionalist analysis in any absolute way. What it does do, however, is squarely place the sacramental within the Crosier religious and liturgical tradition, and thus allow it its own ambiance and weight in refining a sense of Crosier priesthood. It avoids measuring Crosier priesthood according to the secular diocesan models, current

⁹³ Luke-Acts more than other writing in the New Testament underscores the notion of “fullness of Spirit”, “being filled with the Spirit”. With baptism, we hold, all are initiated into the life of the Spirit. The Spirit is really and truly given. But the spiritual leadership of the church as a whole, and thus as a spiritual corporation, has need for celebrating, enhancing, and imploring the higher registers of our shared mystery in transcendental Spirit. James D. G. Dunn, *Jesus and the Spirit*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1997, 357-361, (on the theme ‘filled with spirit’, cf. 171); and Yves Congar, *I believe in the Holy Spirit*, A Crossroad Herder Book, New York, 1997, II:100-111, serve as good references to re-enkindling a recovering sense of Spirit.

⁹⁴ There are numerous points of agreement and inspiration in the treatise by Herbert Vorgrimler to which I would point for further study. Two of which I quote here: “In most areas where priests are active today, we can rightly speak of a ‘sacramental pole’ and an ‘institutional pole’ of their tasks. ... This means, among other things, that both in the sacramental area (e.g., baptism, assisting at marriages, anointing the sick, preaching, blessing, and conducting funerals) [*sic*] and in the institutional field (in teaching, organization, etc.) priests will be replaced by other, non priestly persons. The revival of priestly collegiality can help to build up the image of the priest as a prominent spiritual authority.”⁴⁹ Vorgrimler, 268-269. In the footnote #49 on page 269, Vorgrimler writes: “Against E. Schillebeeckx’s attempt to make relative ordination the [normative] ideal, we would emphasize the positive value in the fact that a priest is primarily seen in the context of the college of presbyters. This college embodies many opportunities for mutual help and a flexibility that is not present when a priest is completely dependent on – and ‘handed over to’ – a parish or other local community.”

and running, as well as the apostolic religious congregations explorations, that seek seemingly to over-identify priesthood according to models of mission and ministry. It further coordinates better with the religious vocation of Crosiers as men grounded and lofted in spirit. It certainly, we make no bones about it, is not an easy model to spell out or live out. It does, however, offer the distinctive advantage of integrating -- almost thoroughly -- the religious vocation (to attain in likeness to the Icon of God) and the ministerial vocation (to proclaim in word and deed the good news of what God is revealing). And as John Paul II notes in the document *Vita Consecrata*, for priests who are at the same time religious, there are not two separable vocations, each tending in its own divergent direction.⁹⁵ Of course, too, this model makes no claim to full adequacy or to express the final and most appropriate formulation. It is, no question about it, a peculiar and personal, meditated mode of expression, an attempt, though, to press on further, out of the common Crosier spirit, if you will, seeking to find itself and come to self-consciousness and articulate expression.⁹⁶ Its worth and resonance will settle in or filter out from discussion over time. Its major worth, it seems to me, is to think outside the functionalist box, to try on an alternative -- though vigilantly traditioned -- framing of the question. It gives rise to thought. And that is there, from where we started, and here where we'll finish.

⁹⁵ *Vita Consecrata* # 31.

⁹⁶ I have learned from Friedrich Schleiermacher, in *The Christian Faith*, the distinction between the idea of spirit, the spirit coming to outward expression, and the spirit recognizing itself therein. Nevertheless these three moments, fitting the Hegelian programmatic dialectic, are not three different substantive spirits. Particularly in regard to the second and third moment, Schleiermacher notes that it is theology's task of recognition, that is, to 'catch the spirit' (moment 3) that comes to expression (moment 2), and as such gives linguistic form to dogma. "...these two elements will appear together and will penetrate each other -- *matter* [moment 2] which is common to all, and which make good its claims as a purely and universally *recognizable* [moment 3] expression of the distinctive Protestant spirit [moment 1]; and peculiar *matter* [moment 2] which expresses the personal views of its exponents [moment 3]." Harper Torchbooks: The Cloister Library, New York, 1963, #28, 1:108 (italics mine).